

Tuesday March 12 1996

Albania D 8.50	Angola FF 200	Armenia AMD 200	Australia AS 28	Austria S 13.76	Belgium BF 33	Benin CFA 200	Bulgaria L 170	Canada C\$ 1.00	Chad CFA 200	Czech Republic KC45	Denmark DK 16	Dubai D 2.50	Egypt E 2.50	Finland F 5.94	France FF 11	Germany DM 2.50	Greece D 350	Hong Kong HK\$ 2.00	Hungary F 200	India IN 100	Indonesia Rp 1,000	Israel NIS 5.90	Italy L 200	Jordan JD 1.25	Korea W 1,000	Lebanon L 2,000	Lithuania US\$ 5	Latvia L 200	Madagascar M 200	Malaysia M 2.50	Maldives M 2.50	Morocco M 20	Netherlands G 4.00	Norway Nkr 100	Qatar QR 1.00	Romania R 2,000	Poland Z 2,000	Portugal E 200	Russia RUB 200	Saudi Arabia R 10	Slovakia S 200	Slovenia S 200	Spain P 166.64	Sweden SK 16	Switzerland SF 3	Taiwan NT 200	Tanzania T 200	Turkey TL 100,000	USA US\$ 2.75	Zimbabwe Z\$ 27.00
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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

46,498

The bitterest split in rock history?

Paula v Bob

G2 with European weather

Mark Lawson on Martin Jnr and Kingsley Snr

Amis amiss

G2 pages 4/5

Education

Why the Open University thinks its time has come

G2 pages 10/11

'If war breaks out with Beijing we are prepared. We have been preparing for 40 years'

Andrew Higgins in Quemoy reports as China today begins live-fire air and sea exercises off the Taiwanese island

WITH 150,000 Chinese troops massed on the mainland, two miles from this Taiwanese island, and United States warships on the way from the Pacific and the Gulf, the soft-spoken headmaster of the Wuning Village Junior School decided yesterday it was time to stop pretending. Assembling the 200 infants in his charge in an underground table tennis and recreation hall designed to double as a bomb shelter, he tried to explain why their parents might be acting a little strangely.

"Children watch television and hear people talking about missiles and military manoeuvres," Wu Chi-tung said. "They can see from adults that the atmosphere here is not normal."

The clearest worry index is rice. At the Gold South Bridge, a cramped shop piled to the ceiling with freshly delivered supplies, rice sales have doubled. The other index is gold. Thieves last week raided two Buddhist temples and stole gold tablets, a theft attributed by the local newspaper to a desire to hedge against China's menace.

Quemoy's highest official, Chen Shui-tai, a veteran of military intelligence, believes there is a 30 per cent chance of an attack. He summoned his staff over the weekend to plan for the provision of water, electricity and rice in the event of war.

"If war breaks out with Beijing we are prepared. We have been preparing for 40 years. We have fought them time and again before. We have lots of experience," said Mr Chen, who now spends much of the day sweating under television lights as he labours to tell Taiwan and the world that everything is under control.

"I tell the Communist Party clearly and forcefully, yes you can take Quemoy eventually but you will pay a terrible price. It will cost you 150,000 lives," Mr Chen said. "They should consider this. Do they want to pay such a price? Do they want Quemoy turned into a cemetery?"

He estimates that the local garrison, recently reinforced and now thought to be about the same size as the civilian population of 47,000, could hold out unaided for six months. "If no one comes to help us then we would have to surrender or be finished off."

But so far, here on the front lines of volatile international crisis, the main casualties are



Job for superman... A Taiwanese poster yesterday shows President Lee Teng-hui 'fighting one battle after another'

groups of old women with silver teeth, who make their living selling artillery-shell key-holders, rice-wine bottles in the shape of army boots, plastic souvenir soldiers and other tourist paraphernalia.

"They [the tourists] are all cowards and do not dare come here anymore," growled an ancient harridan, carrying 25 for Polaroid photographs taken against a bombed-out building from the first battle for Quemoy in 1949. "We've been frightened here so many times, we're no longer afraid."

The mood of soldiers swings between jittery vigilance as they patrol roads, dig trenches and man checkpoints with a zeal not seen in years, and raucous abandon when off duty, as in the Good Food Karaoke Bar early yesterday afternoon, guzzling



Police declare Jackson assault a Pulp fiction

Gary Young

IT IS rarely that Jarvis Cocker gets to accuse anyone of being immature. But yesterday the singer, who executed a one-man stage invasion to disrupt Michael Jackson's performance at the Brit Awards last month, told Jackson fans to grow up after police cleared him of all allegations of assaulting children during his outburst.

In the end Cocker, lead singer of the Brit-pop band Pulp, slipped out the back entrance forcing a stampede as the press and broadcasters competed with primary school children for a sight.

In his Joe 90 glasses, pink

shirt and purple tie Cocker, aged 32, later said he would consider civil action over the accusations which followed the incident. He celebrated his release with a glass of champagne and hailed the decision as a "victory for common sense".

At the time Cocker explained his actions as a "protest at the way Michael Jackson sees himself as some Christ-like figure with the power of healing".

Yesterday he said: "I have not got a personal vendetta against Michael Jackson; anybody who invented the moonwalk is all right by me. It was that performance that was in that taste. I think it would be

good for him to get a bit of reality into his life."

He added: "I was very upset [by the accusations]. I think anybody would be. It is one of the worst things you could be accused of. I mean, it is not something you would put on your CV, is it?"

After his protest Cocker received the backing of several celebrities including Noel Gallagher of Oasis, Mick Hucknall of Simply Red and Brian Harvey of East 17.

But yesterday a humble Cocker said: "I am not a hero. It really was something that was done on the spur of the moment. I just felt I had to make some kind of a statement about it."

Jarvis Cocker, in glasses, and minders



Jarvis Cocker, in glasses, and minders PHOTOGRAPH SEAN SMITH

Michael White Political Editor

JOHN Major last night set his face against Sir James Goldsmith's demands for an early referendum on the prospective European super-state, despite warnings in a leaked Conservative memorandum that the billionaire financier's fringe party could cost the Tories up to 25 marginal seats at the general election.

As the scale of Sir James's pressure on the Cabinet to bow to his agenda — or face a £30 million election fight with his Referendum Party — emerged at Westminster, nervous Tory MPs and MEPs were at each other's throats over the best tactics for neutralising what some regard as crude blackmail.

Their minds were concentrated by a chilling assessment of the Anglo-French MEP's organisational strength — including 38 full-time staff, 25,000 supporters and 400 approved candidates — in an internal memo for Tory MPs, which concluded that it could "make the difference between the Conservative Party winning or losing the election."

The memo warns Sir James could spend more than the three main parties put together to achieve his single purpose. "Sir James is personally in charge of identifying and selecting candidates. These candidates are credible; some are former Conservatives and are not fringe voters," it states.

In 1992, 14 Tory MPs won with majorities of less than 1.3 per cent. Sir James, says the memo, could get 1 to 2 per cent.

Tomorrow ministers will test the alleged return of the economic feel-good factor by announcing April 11 as the date for the delayed bye-election in Staffordshire SE, where the late David Lightbown had a 7.193 Conservative majority.

Defeat would cut Mr Major's Commons majority to

one and lay him open to a no confidence vote on the two hyper-sensitive issues of the moment, Northern Ireland and Europe.

Though some MPs believe that the Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney, has been engaged in extensive negotiation with Goldsmith forces, party officials rubbished yesterday's leaked memo as the unauthorised conclusions of a researcher, Alastair Graham. It appears to have been passed to the BBC from within the Tory Euro-group in order to isolate and undermine Sir James.

In the short term, at least, it is having the opposite effect to the eye of today's white paper setting out the Government's position on the forthcoming inter-governmental conference (IGC) to review the 1991 Maastricht Treaty, whose "federalist" aims Sir James wants retrospectively put to voters in a referendum on election day.

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, a Major ally, was more blunt, telling BBC Radio: "We aren't going to be panicked into any particular stance just because one very rich businessman takes a particular view about these issues."

Under pressure from Dr Mawhinney, Mr Major has signalled a Tory commitment to a referendum on a single currency — probably this month — though Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, is still holding out.

Mr Graham's memo describes direct mailing efforts from a computer database, costly market research and advertising, telephone canvassing and other techniques. "The Referendum Party is a serious organisation which is intent on causing damage to the Conservative Party," he warns.

Many Tories feel that overstates the threat since Sir James's candidates would not get more than 500 votes at most, some from Labour supporters.

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Sketch

Crèche course in stirring debate



Simon Hoggart

JEREMY Corbyn (Glasgow N) asked for a full-time nursery in the House of Commons...

the time to air them (why ever not?). Dennis Skinner said that in 1988 they had trotted through 33 questions in 45 minutes...

"In view of this disgraceful breach, will you agree that he is like many of his friends on that side of the crèche, knee-deep in dishonour or at least in stinky goo?"

Tamsin: "On a point of order, is it in order for Chloe Tomkins to throw up on my new trainers? I am sure the whole Nursery will agree that she is yukky and everyone hates her."

I don't think so, though I suppose at times the debate would be more elevated than in the Chamber itself.

Yesterday they also had a brief discussion about why so few newspapers bother to report them any more.

David Winnick (Lab, Walsall N) asked whether the low attendance might be linked with the missing media.

Betty Boothroyd (Lab, Walsall N) said she had her own views on the subject but felt that this was not

message was that the man is a genius and folkie pro. Four identical Weissenborns sat next to him, a sign of impending rambling improvisations.

Harper, now on his second album, is generating a buzz reminiscent of the one surrounding Chapman's 1988 debut.

The long jam is rarely welcome at gigs, where the audience can't very well go and switch on the kettle, but Harper was too gone to notice.

It seems inappropriate for an artist with a faculty for pointed lyrics to devote so much time to meandering instrumentals, no matter how wonderful the musicians (and the drum, baseball-capped Mobbey was a virtuoso).

There were times during extended tom-tom breaks when you couldn't help longing for an armchair and Cracker on the TV. Harper is relatively open to the idea of a good time.

He may have spoken in a half-wake Los Angeles drawl, but the excitement was conveyed by the way he shifted in his chair.

What's more, however offensive Jeremy Passman is at least he doesn't shout a wall of abuse when a politician is trying to say something.

Oddy enough. Transport Questions yesterday were a throwback to a more serious time, when MPs actually sought information and some dared criticise their own front bench.

Sir George Young, the Secretary of State, looks like a figure from the same historic past.

He is our Thin Controller and ought to wear a top hat. (Like the one in the Bill Tidy cartoon who, surveying a wrecked compartment with slashed seats and broken lights, says: "Right, that does it. No more royal trains!")

MPs from all sides ganged up to attack Railtrack, which has taken over from the royal family and Cedric Brown as the nation's Most Disliked Institution.

None was angrier than Bill Cash (C, Stafford) in whose constituency the first weekend crash took place, who spoke yesterday for at least 20 seconds without mentioning Europe once — a record.

The junior minister John Watts said vaguely that it would be unwise to speculate on the cause of the accident until — he implies — Railtrack's investigation had decided Railtrack was not to blame.

MPs bayed in anger. Hugh Bayley (Lab, York) mused why it was that, since privatisation was supposed to increase competition, all four freight companies had been sold to Wisconsin Central.

Wisconsin: a lovely if freezing state, famous in the US only for cheese. Perhaps that explains something.

THE policeman stumbled, glared through drunken eyes at the French soldiers and decided Railtrack was not to blame.

The policeman had almost left behind his colleagues had come running out of the Ildiza police station, carrying a few last plastic bags of office equipment and brandy.

Seven of them piled into a blue Volkswagen Golf just as smoke began to rise from the building.



Final gesture... A drunken Serb holds a book titled, We are Tito's, Tito is Ours, outside the burning court in Ildiza yesterday

Serb police leave with a bang

'Ildiza we will never forget you,' he sang, dripping blood

Julian Borger in Ildiza

THE policeman stumbled, glared through drunken eyes at the French soldiers and decided Railtrack was not to blame.

raised a bloodied one-finger salute. Thus Bosnian Serb rule ended yesterday in the Sarajevo suburb of Ildiza.

The policeman had almost left behind his colleagues had come running out of the Ildiza police station, carrying a few last plastic bags of office equipment and brandy.

Seven of them piled into a blue Volkswagen Golf just as smoke began to rise from the building.

The carload of police cheered. As the Serbs abandoned Sarajevo, one suburb at a time, arson has become the principal expression of defiance of the Dayton peace accord.

The captain pleaded with a cordon of French soldiers: "He's drunk and he's somewhere in the building. You have to let us back in."

Two minutes later, the last policeman in Ildiza found his own way to the exit and — reeling badly from the morning's intake of brandy — tried



A Serb woman kisses the flag at Ildiza town hall, before fleeing

The police station fire caused especially raucous celebration because it was set under the noses of the French troops sent to guard the building.

"Ildiza, Ildiza, we will never forget you," the policeman sang, dripping blood from his wounded hand while his colleagues propelled him towards the waiting car.

As he passed the Nato soldiers, he offered his bloody finger by way of valediction. The policeman moved off in a motley convoy, waving Serb flags and shouting into the air.

Nato initially refused to get involved in policing and fire-fighting in the Sarajevo suburbs, but it is now becoming reluctantly drawn in as arsonists and Serb gangs men-

ace the few surviving Muslims and Croats in the area, as well as Serbs who have opted to stay.

French firefighters rescued 20 people trapped in burning blocks of flats in Ildiza over the past few days, as it became clear the local Serb fire brigades were not prepared to help.

In Grbavica, the last Serb suburb, due to be transferred on March 19, Nato's presence has been considerably less noticeable.

Aid workers, residents and journalists tried to keep fires in a block of flats under control while Italian troops and local firemen looked on.

"Anyone who stays here is an enemy," said one Serb fireman, who refused to give his name. "Why should I help them?"

Only 10 people were still living in the 12-storey apartment block, mostly elderly Serbs and Muslims. The Italian troops have stepped up their patrols during the day but are virtually invisible at night.

Under the terms of agreement, Lord Young stands to pick-up: A basic payment of £118,750 which amounts to three months' salary.

Bonus payments worth an estimated £210,000, though the precise sum will be worked out until the end of the financial year.

Payments for pensions, health insurance and use of company car totalling another £55,000.

Labour's City spokesman, Alistair Darling, last night said: "Payouts of this nature send the wrong signals around the world."

It is extremely difficult to justify payouts of this magnitude. Rewards should be linked to success.

But C&W's new chairman, Dr Brian Smith, yesterday insisted that the payoff agreed with Lord Young was "fair to everyone concerned, the company, our employees and our shareholders."

He added: "Lord Young will gain from his share options in line with the doubling of the share price during his time as chairman of the company."

"We are very pleased to have been able to reach an amicable agreement with Lord Young. He has led the company through a period of rapid change and he leaves the company in a strong position at the leading edge of telecommunications worldwide."

The United States said yesterday it planned to give \$100 million (\$55 million) to help the Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia build an army to match the Bosnian Serbs.

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Apartheid's generals on trial

Twenty accused plead innocent to sending Inkatha killers against ANC

David Baresford in Durban

SOUTH AFRICA'S former minister of defence, General Magnus Malan, and his 19 co-accused pleaded not guilty to charges of murder and conspiracy yesterday, denying that they had sent death squads to kill black opponents of apartheid rule.

Police used a water-cannon to disperse about 100 pro-Inkatha demonstrators outside the supreme court in Durban as the prosecution opened its case against the general, 12 former security force commanders, six alleged assassins and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's former personal secretary.

The charges against the 20 accused arise from the 1987 massacre of 13 people, including women and children, at KwaMakhutha in KwaZulu-Natal. The state alleges the massacre was a trial run by a group of 200 Inkatha assassins, trained by South African military intelligence at a secret camp in the Caprivi strip, in Namibia. The hit squads were allegedly trained to attack supporters of the African National Congress.

The KwaZulu-Natal attorney-general, Tim McNally, justified the conspiracy charges in his opening address, saying: "The owner of a vicious bulldog who un-



Guards flank General Malan outside the court yesterday

leashes it upon a crowd of people cannot be heard to lament the fact that it chooses to savage a young child."

He told the packed courtroom: "Justice will be pursued in this case no matter what the cost... This prosecution will cast a shaft of judicial light into a corner of our history which has hitherto been dark and secret."

Documents showed that the former head of the defence force, General Kat Liebenberg, was "one of the principal architects" of the conspir-

acy, Mr McNally said. Gen Liebenberg, who reportedly has cancer of the prostate, was yesterday allowed to sit outside the dock in a padded chair. He was wearing a neck brace.

'If war occurs we are prepared. We have been preparing for 40 years'

continued from page 1 awoke bar was yesterday packed with soldiers transfixed by screens flashing simulated warfare with China.

Unlike their predecessors, who spent years fighting Mao Zedong on the mainland, the only contact today's soldiers have with the People's Liberation Army is through binoculars. They glower across the water and bombard the mainland with pop-music from mammoth loudspeakers at each end of Quemooy.

Sometimes I have seen Chinese soldiers over there," said a young recruit at the Horse Hill observation post.

"They were reading newspapers and moving to the rhythm of our music." But the PLA now seems to have found its own, more bellicose, beat. And as China falls further out of step with Taiwan and much of the world, people in Quemooy worry about their future on this sin-

gularly vulnerable spot. The headmaster, Mr Wu, said he had been asked whether it might not be better to flee Quemooy. "I said, run to where? To Taiwan? That is even more dangerous. They can't fire rockets at us here. We are too close. They might hit themselves instead."

Young to get £2.5m payoff

Patrick Donovan City Editor

LORD YOUNG, the former Tory cabinet minister, is likely to pick up more than £2.5 million as compensation for losing his job as chairman of Cable and Wireless in an acrimonious boardroom coup.

The compensation brings to £3.8 million the overall cost of payoffs from November's sacking of Lord Young and his arch-rival, former chief executive James Ross. C&W has already announced that Mr Ross is to receive compensation worth almost £1.3 million.

Both men were ousted by the rest of the board because they were locked in a power struggle which had begun to threaten the stability of the group.

Lord Young has managed to extract the huge payout after protracted negotiations through his solicitors despite previously claiming that he had no formal contract of employment.

It is understood that Lord Young, a former trade and industry secretary, based his claim on a "secret" letter from the late Lord Sharr, a previous chairman of C&W, which set out his entitlements. This caused surprise among the rest of executive as they did not know the document existed.

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Six arrested as ice hockey players slug it out — before match starts

Martin Walmsworth

POLICE and sporting authorities are investigating a new record for one of the world's most aggressive games — an ice hockey match ended after 58 seconds with six players under arrest.

handoffs as medical staff attended to a broken nose and smashed tooth on the Eumberside Hawks' new Canadian signing Bruce Bell, allegedly hit with a hockey stick. They were bailed to report to Sunderland police next month.

Four Hawks, Mike Bishop, Graham Garden, Norman Flinnington and Ian Pound, were also arrested, but were released without charge.

They were taken from the rink in



Lords revolt on divorce bill seen off

Rebecca Smithers
Political Correspondent

THE Government last night quashed a Lords rebellion which sought to extend the "cooling off" period for divorce from 12 months to 18 months, as business managers conceded that the controversial new Family Law Bill faces a rough ride when it moves to the Commons.

A cross-party amendment increasing the period for "reflection and consideration" before the granting of a divorce to 18 months in contested cases, or where couples have children, was defeated by a Government majority of 48. Voting was 157 to 109.

The amendment was tabled by the former Tory cabinet minister, Baroness Young, who has led a campaign to change key aspects of the divorce reforms, which she fears will undermine the institution of marriage.

Speaking during the bill's Third Reading debate, Baroness Young told peers: "In my entire political experience, which extends almost 50 years, I have never had the support for the stand that I have taken over anything as I have had in this case."

The legislation has had a rocky ride through the Lords — notably from the Tory benches — which led to a humiliating Government defeat nearly two weeks ago over proposals not to allow the proceeds of pensions to be split between divorcing couples.

The bill goes to the Commons around Easter, when a sizeable group of Conservatives — including the former cabinet minister John Patten — has pledged to back Lady Young. Last night government business managers admitted they were worried about the bill's next stage.

Although Labour has given the legislation nominal support, it has made clear that the Government should not take its continued backing for granted. Labour's legal affairs spokesman, Paul Boateng, says the party wants assurances on amendments aimed at supporting families and strengthening the law against violence in the home.

During yesterday's debate, Lord Archer, the Bishop of Ripon and Lord Boyd-Carpenter were among the supporters of Lady Young's amendment. Labour peers, led by Lord Irvine of Lairg, backed the Government's proposals, claiming that lengthening the cooling off period would cause "greater harm to innocent children" and that the law cannot compel people to live together.

'Barmy' scheme tries to put Harold Wilson in a car park

Martin Wainwright

THE tradition of prophets falling to find honour in their home towns was upheld yesterday with the release of proposals to site a statue of the late Lord Wilson by a Huddersfield leading bay or on a multi-storey car park.

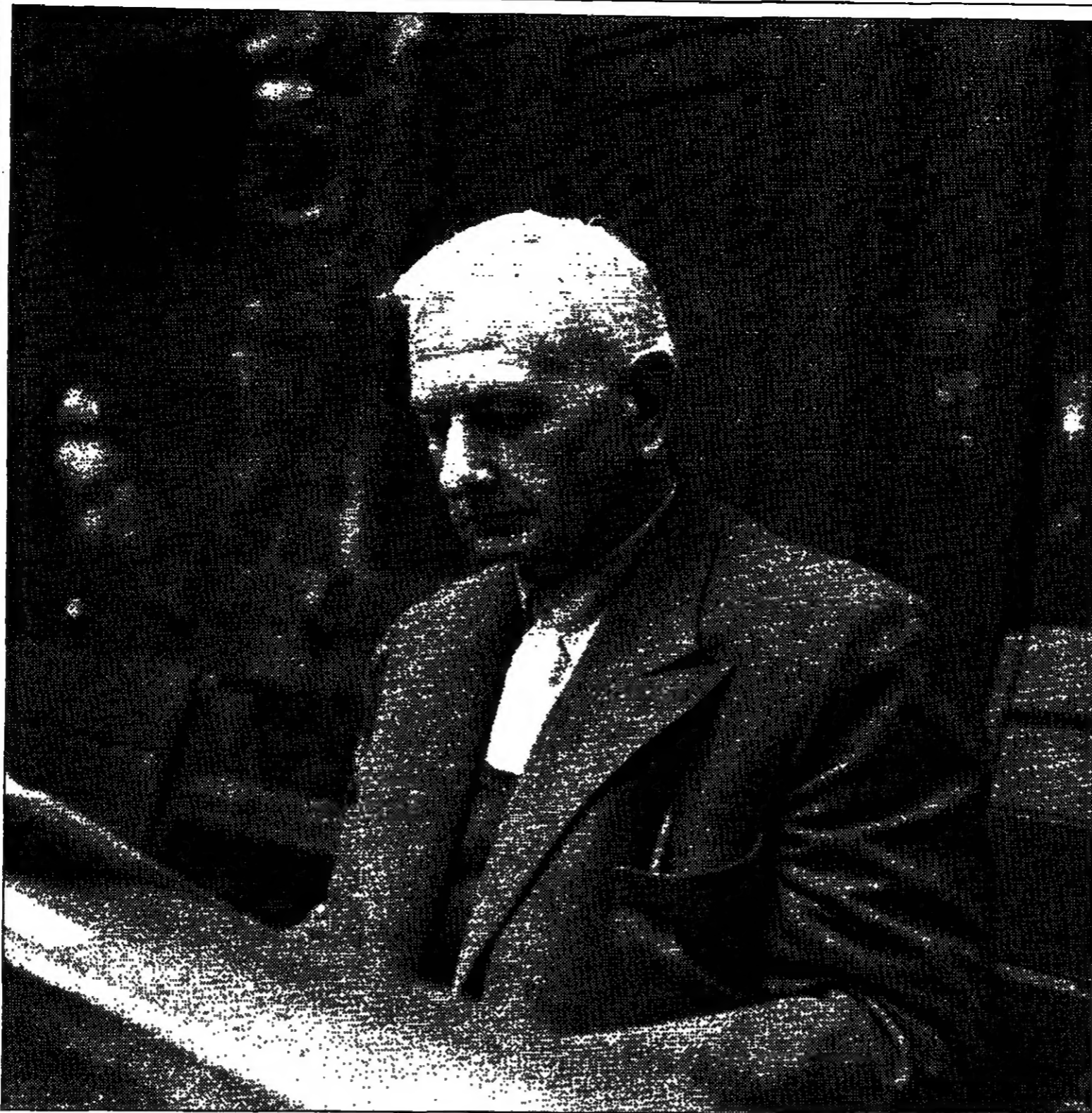
The full range of options will be presented to Kirkless council tomorrow, but a pre-emptive strike by the famously self-deprecating prime minister's friends was launched yesterday to quash the more "barmy" schemes.

"It's an insult to an outstanding prime minister," said Lord Wilson's friend from schooldays, Harold Ainley, aged 80, who has been campaigning for a tribute since the statesman died last year.

Councillors in the three main parties, which have

The Flick chair has been causing growing anguish for Oxford dons. It has raised profound moral questions on the ethics of fundraising when colleges are increasingly dependent on private largesse

Edward Pilkington on suspect largesse



Friedrich Flick at the Nuremberg trial after the second world war and, above left, his grandson Gert-Rudolph Flick in 1975. MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: MULTON

Balliol accepts cash despite 'link to Nazis'

THE governing body of Balliol College, Oxford, yesterday gave unanimous backing to the establishment of a professorship financed by the grandson of a Nazi war criminal.

Members of the college critical of the move to set up a Flick chair for European Thought called the decision a betrayal of Balliol's liberal traditions.

"It is a moral disgrace which represents the abandonment of Balliol's humane record. I am ashamed of my college," said David Selbourne, a writer on ethics.

But the college last night responded that it had no moral case to answer. "Balliol does not accept that anyone can bear guilt by descent," it said.

Prominent figures in the Jewish community agreed a line had to be drawn under Germany's Nazi past. Lord Weidenfeld, who is of Austrian Jewish descent and who lost half his family in the Holocaust, said: "There is a new generation in Germany and it is time for reconciliation."

The Flick chair has been causing growing anguish for Oxford dons, particularly within Balliol, for the past few months. It has raised profound moral questions on the ethics of fundraising when colleges are increasingly de-

pendent on private largesse. In 1991 Dr Gert-Rudolph Flick, an heir to the Mercedes car fortune, who is a benefactor of colleges, hospitals and the arts, offered Oxford a sum believed to be £350,000 over five years to set up a chair in his name.

The money was accepted by the university and earmarked for Balliol until it was pointed out that the history of the Flick empire could render the donation highly controversial. Dr Flick's grandfather, a prominent industrialist called Friedrich Flick, was put on trial as a war criminal at Nuremberg in 1947 and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. He was found guilty of using slave labour in his munitions factories.

In January last year, after concerns about Flick were raised, the university called on its secretive Ethical Committee, of which even the membership is kept confidential, to investigate. It concluded that the money on offer was untainted, there was no conceivable association between Dr Gert-Rudolph Flick and Nazi atrocities and no grounds for supposing "that Dr Flick, or the various recipients of his personal generosity, could be regarded as beneficiaries of those events".

Critics of the Flick chair were not satisfied. They said the committee, by operating behind closed doors, could not be regarded as independent.

At the heart of the debate is

the provenance of Dr Flick's immense personal wealth — estimated at about £200 million. Supporters say his inheritance stemmed from the rebuilding of the Flick empire after the war as a separate, and morally unquestionable, venture. The wartime operations of Friedrich Flick were almost entirely dismantled or lost to the Communists in eastern Europe.

But critics insist that wartime profits made with slave labour were used as seed-corn to finance the family's post-war recovery. Under anti-Nazi laws, the family was forced to break up several of its industrial cartels but received ample compensation which was then reinvested in car production.

"There is a saying that gold has no smell, but that isn't true. Gold reeks, and there is a distinctly unpleasant odour coming off here," said David Cesarani, professor of Jewish studies at Manchester University.

The Holocaust Educational Trust, which has many Jewish survivors among its members, said there was no point in insisting that "every deutschemark has to be cleaned". But it said that it was concerned about an academic chair bearing the name Flick. The trust's chairman, Labour MP Greville Janner, has written to the university

to protest.

Bombarded by several such protests, the university recently agreed to rename the professorship in the hope of disassociating it from Friedrich. It will now be called the Gert-Rudolph Flick chair.

But the dispute is unlikely to die down until Dr Flick pleads his opponents by making an unequivocal repudiation of the actions of his grandfather. Lord Weidenfeld last night said that "anybody who knows him well knows he is on the side of the angels".

A final resolution will have to wait, however, until Dr Flick returns from east Africa where he cannot be contacted.

Leader comment, page 8

jointly appealed for public subscriptions for a lifelike monument, turned on large parts of the "zealous but bizarre" shortlist of 12 sites prepared by their plans.

Friend Fisher, a Conservative, said: "It's outrageous. If you are going to recognise a bloke for what he's done, it should be in St George's Square, where people can see."

The square, along with Market Square and McAlpine Stadium where Huddersfield Town play, is at the top of the shortlist; but an agreement tomorrow may only be the dress rehearsal for battles about the actual statue. Mr Ainley and Eric Lawson, a Labour councillor, form a united front against the statue wearing Wilson's trademark Gannex mac. "No mac, please," said Mr Lawson. "But I suppose we'll have to accept that godawful pipe."



A wartime Flick munitions factory at Wetzlar, Germany.

Frederick the Great's lucre and guilt

Richest man in post-war Germany made fortune on the back of Nazi slave labour

THEY called him Frederick the Great in reference to the fortune he amassed as post-war Germany's richest man. The epithet could equally be applied to the scale of his war crimes, writes Edward Pilkington.

Friedrich Flick was born on July 10 1883 in Ernsdorf, Westphalia. He began work in the iron industry and by the 1930s had risen to be head of United Steel Works, which owned plants in east Germany and controlled most of the Ruhr's production.

He was an early member of the Keppeler Circle of industrialists who supported Hitler, investing 7 million

marks in the Nazis during the 1930s. In return, the country's largest private iron, steel and arms producer, he benefited from government contracts.

Flick was an adviser and financial backer to Heinrich Himmler, the SS leader who spearheaded the extermination of Jews. Flick funds are said to have been used for the transportation of 112 Jews from Auschwitz to Natzweiler under a project in which they were to be killed and used for "ethnographic" research.

Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, a political writer who has studied Flick's record, has noted how Himmler took the industrialist on a

tour of Dachau concentration camp in 1938. Flick described "large airy rooms" with canteen facilities as good as those of any large hotel.

His main crime in the eyes of Nuremberg investigators was his company's alleged use of 48,000 "slave" labourers, many of whom were drawn from concentration camps to work in munitions factories.

According to Robert Wistrich, author of Who's Who in Nazi Germany, eight out of 10 of Flick's slave labourers died while working for him.

In 1947 Flick was one of 32 German industrialists to face war crime trials in Nuremberg. He asserted that he had only been following SS orders, and said "nothing will convince us we are

war criminals". But evidence produced in court showed that he had requested slave labour from the SS to help produce railway trucks. He was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, but was released in 1950.

He consistently declined to apologise for his war record or to pay compensation to the surviving slave labourers. In 1970 the former American High Commissioner for Germany, John McCloy, who had granted Flick clemency 20 years earlier, asked him to pay compensation as a gesture of goodwill.

Flick refused, stating: "There is no argument, not even a moral one, to justify fulfilling such demands."

Friedrich Flick died in 1972 leaving \$1 billion to his children.

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4 BRITAIN

Tories split on grammar school plan

Donald MacLeod
Education Correspondent

A DEEPENING split in the Government over education became clear yesterday as Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, distanced herself from Downing Street plans for a big expansion of grammar schools using private finance.

She told the grant maintained schools' annual conference in Birmingham that there would be a cautious extension of schools' right to select up to 15 per cent of pupils on academic ability, but stressed there would be no pressure on comprehensives to change.

Undermining the basis for a new Conservative initiative to invite industry to put up funding for new grammar schools, Mrs Shephard said powers to do this already existed. "There is nothing to stop that happening now in the grant maintained sector within the existing arrangements," she said. But she made it clear applications would be considered in the light of surplus places in the locality, a test which has defeated several applications for new schools.

Privately, grant maintained schools doubt if substantial funding would come from the private sector and point to the failure of the city technology colleges initiative which managed to start only 15 schools even when most of the money was put up by Government.

Sir Rob Balchin, chairman of the Grant Maintained Schools Foundation, said the experience of DTAs showed a few private sponsors were willing to support education but the Government would have to find large sums.

Mrs Shephard made it clear she had nothing to do with the disclosure of Downing Street plans for a grammar school in every large town in England and Wales.

Political briefings suggested closed "sink" schools would be refurbished with private money, or that business could put up capital for

new grant maintained grammar schools. "The Government is in favour of selection as part of the general diversity of the state education system because I believe firmly the existence of selective schools helps to drive up standards," said Mrs Shephard.

Ministers would be looking at the recent consultation on admissions procedures and the possibility of taking forward selection before the general election.

But she told the conference it was nonsense to suggest the Government wanted to press schools to become selective. "Grant maintained status suits all types of schools. I know some of you became grant maintained to preserve the comprehensive nature of your schools. And if a school is happy with its present character, that's fine."

She predicted that Labour's conversion to self government for schools would be reversed if it gained power, and grant maintained schools and local authority schools would lose their freedoms.

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said John Major was coming up with ideas that had been rejected already. "It is clear that there is a significant split in the Government on education and this is simply the latest manifestation of it."

The political debate about grammar schools has been sharpened by the decision of Labour frontbencher Harriet Harman to send her son Joe to a grammar. Mr Blunkett has conceded that some comprehensives have failed and called for schools to specialise more.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, which represents many grant maintained heads, said the Government was placing far too much reliance on private finance. "Industry wants to improve the quality of education for all children, not a minority, and will fight shy of anything that has political baggage."

Leader comment, page 8



Police divers search the River Ely for clues to 'vicious and callous' murder. A sexual motive for the killing has not been ruled out

PHOTOGRAPHS: HUN EVANS

Killer left woman to drown in river

Geoffrey Gibbs

A WOMAN murdered while taking her dogs for a late-night walk in a Cardiff suburb was tied up, thrown into a river and left to drown, police said yesterday.

Karen Skipper's partially clothed body was recovered from the river Ely by police divers on Sunday morning after a local businessman found her two dogs sitting whining on the river bank and raised the alarm.

A post-mortem examination has established that she drowned, but showed no obvious signs of sexual assault, though she had suffered superficial injuries.

Mrs Skipper, aged 34, regularly walked her dogs in the area. Detectives said it was not known whether she was conscious when she entered the water. Her hands were tied behind her back.

"This was a vicious and callous attack on a woman simply out walking her dogs," said Detective Superintendent Terry Ewington, the officer heading the investigation. "She has met with someone who has bound her hands, put her in the river and killed her. It is a brutal and shocking case."

"There is obviously great concern about the terrible manner of her death. We are most anxious to trace everyone in the area on Saturday night or early Sunday morning because they may have seen something suspicious going on."

Police, who are keen to trace Mrs Skipper's movements in the three days leading up to her murder, say robbery does not appear to have been a motive for the attack as gold jewellery she was wearing had not been removed.

They have not ruled out a sexual motive. Mrs Skipper's body was discovered lying in five feet of water 10 feet from the banks of the Ely at Birdies Field in the Fairwater area of the city.



Karen Skipper and her dogs Sammy (left) and Ellen. They were found whining on river bank



The scene of the murder is only a mile from where office worker Geraldine Palk, 27, was killed in December 1990.

She had been stabbed 81 times and raped. Her body was left in a brook that runs alongside a local leisure centre.

Police said that while there is nothing to connect the two murders, a link has not been ruled out and officers will refer to details on the Palk computerised database should the need arise.

Mrs Skipper was last seen after leaving the house she shared with three friends in Mill Road, Ely, at 11.30 on Saturday night to take her dogs, Sammy, a black Labrador cross-breed, and Ellen, a golden coloured mixed collie, for their night-time walk.

After walking down Mill Road she is thought to have crossed a footbridge leading to Birdies Field, a playing field area which is popular with anglers, dog walkers and children but unlit at night.

Her body was found about 400 yards from the footbridge. Police have not established an exact time of death but believe she was killed at about midnight or shortly afterwards.

Her body was not discovered until 8.30 the following morning.

A businessman out walking his own dogs came across Sammy and Ellen sitting forlornly at the river's edge and spotted some articles of women's clothing.

Axle break blamed for Stafford train crash

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

A FRACTURED axle was confirmed by Railtrack yesterday as the cause of the Stafford rail accident late on Friday.

Railtrack said that the investigation team was "specially focusing on the collapse of an axle on one of the four wheel sets wagons". It stressed that the team had found no evidence of track defect, vandalism or signalling irregularity.

Railtrack has appointed James Ward, a former director of safety and quality at British Rail's research division, to lead an independent inquiry into the cause of the accident, in which a Royal Mail sorter was killed.

Mr Ward will be assisted on the panel by senior managers from Railtrack and the train operators. The component parts of the wagon have been moved to the railway technical centre at Derby for further examination and tests.

Railtrack said the results of the investigations would form "a vital part" of the evidence to be considered by the inquiry which is expected to begin hearings this week.

It also confirmed that the initial derailment of the freight train occurred about 500 yards before the collision with the mail train. The investigation will concentrate on whether the suspect freight wagon was properly maintained.

It is one of about 14,000 privately owned wagons currently on the railway. A further 17,000 were recently sold off by British Rail when it disposed of its freight business to the American operator Wisconsin.

Railtrack was yesterday criticised by Brian Donohoe, Labour MP for Cunningham South and a member of the Commons transport select committee, for cutting back on its capacity to respond to accidents. Six months ago the company reduced the number of rail-mounted recovery cranes from 11 to five, none based in Scotland.

Mr Donohoe said fewer cranes of this type meant Railtrack had much larger areas to cover "and that must affect their response times to the scene of a derailment".

Officer 'claimed blacks lack education for armed forces'

David Pallister

A MINISTRY of Defence spokesman is quoted in the Voice newspaper today as saying blacks are not educated enough for the armed forces.

In an article on the under-representation of blacks in the services, Squadron Leader Tony Cowan is alleged to have said: "The armed forces tend to recruit people who are quite well-educated."

"One set of people are good at one thing but not so good at another. Your Afro-Caribbean is a big chap, often very athletic and more interested in sports than us."

The interview is likely to inflame controversy over racism in the forces following the leak last week of a Commission for Racial Equality report which found systematic abuse.

The MoD's chief press officer, Tim Downes, was yesterday unable to deny that the comments were made, but said that Squadron Leader Cowan "doesn't recognise those particular words in the form they are in".

He added: "The squadron leader was attempting at some length to explain to the journalist what our policy is. 'Whatever may have been said, this quote is not an accurate reflection of the MoD's policy.'"

"We do not have any discrimination policy to the armed forces. We positively welcome people from all ethnic groups."

The CRE spokesman said: "All the armed services have a very low level of ethnic minority recruitment, which is set against a very low level of applications." In 1994-95, ethnic minority servicemen made up 1 per cent of the navy, 0.5 per cent of the army and 0.5 per cent of the RAF.

Couple in debt sue lover

Court hears bitter tale of unpaid home bills and broken promises

Owen Bowcott

A MARRIED woman who had a 16-year affair with a Surrey property developer yesterday began suing her former lover for £200,000 to cover accumulated debts — supported by her husband.

The relationship, revealed by a London High Court hearing, ended in a bitter mixture of unpaid bills, broken promises and blackmail allegations, it was claimed.

Doreen Marsh, who lives in Salisbury, maintains her former lover, Basil Dunning, encouraged her to live the high life and agreed to pay for a £180,000 home. But, after suffering a stroke, Mr Dunning stopped paying the bills, leaving her and her husband Donald, who had long known about the affair, to face financial ruin.

The couple, both now grey-haired, are demanding that Mr Dunning, of Puttenham, Guildford, cover their debts, which have now risen to £200,000.

Mr Dunning insists that "certainly by mid-1991, he was being blackmailed", a claim which the Marshes deny. Mr Marsh, he said,

threatened to tell his wife of the affair unless he paid up. Having already lavished thousands of pounds on his paramour, he claims Mr and Mrs Marsh are being "just greedy". Mr Justice Lindsay heard.

Gabriel Fadipe, counsel for the couple, said Mrs Marsh and her property developer lover had been carrying on an "intimate affair" for 16 years when, in 1988, he offered to buy her a new home.

Mr Marsh had known of the affair for years. Mr Dunning's wife had also known the truth, but by 1982 had believed that the relationship was over.

Mr Fadipe said Mr Dunning disliked the Marshes' modest two-bedroomed cottage, Little Hawkesgrove in East Grimstead, Salisbury. He added: "Mrs Marsh will deny ever having had sex with Mr Dunning at Little Hawkesgrove, certainly while her husband was there."

Mr and Mrs Marsh subsequently bought a second house, Avenir, in Ashfield, Barton Stacey, near Winchester, with the aid of a £165,000 Lloyds Bank loan in February 1988.

Mr Fadipe said the couple would never have had the

means to buy the property without Mr Dunning's assurances that he would cover the loan. The only reason Mr Dunning had not taken out the loan in his own name was his fear that he might be discovered by his wife.

"Mr Dunning insisted that Mrs Marsh always bought the best of everything. When she bought some wine glasses, he complained because they were not Baccarat crystal", Mr Fadipe added.

Matters came to a head in July 1991 when Mr Dunning suffered a serious stroke and, save possibly on one occasion, Mrs Marsh had no contact with him since.

The hearing continues.

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War games... a Puma helicopter on exercise at the range

Army loses battle over firing range

Martin Wainwright and David Fairhall

NATIONAL park authority yesterday threw out military plans to expand and develop an artillery and rocket-firing range on the slopes of the Cheviots at Otterburn in Northumberland and set up the prospect of a public inquiry showdown.

Proposals to build new roads and buildings for heavy weaponry were rejected after intensive negotiations ended in "insufficient" concessions by the Ministry of Defence.

The army's plans included over 30 miles of military road-widening, three miles of new road, 46 gun emplacements and a central maintenance depot the size of six football pitches. The facilities would allow use of the 45 tonne AS90 self-propelled gun at Otterburn as well as the M28 multi-launch rocket system. Otter-

burn is the only UK range where the large M28 rocket can be fired tactically in safe surroundings.

A final decision will be made by Northumberland county council and rejection would leave the army with the final option of an appeal to the Environment Department and a public inquiry — the sort of detailed hearing which has been the park's aim since the prospect of enlarging the range was raised more than two years ago.

"We cannot make any further concessions," Lt Col Patrick Gouldsbury of the army's training staff said after presenting a package of narrower tank roads, public access for up to 100 days a year, three new footpaths and military co-operation in a visitor centre and improvements to



Out of range... an exercise at the army's live firing exercise range at Otterburn, where expansion plans have been rejected

PHOTOGRAPHS MIKE SCOTT

Sinn Fein leader spares Clinton's blushes at glitzy New York bash as he treads fine line

Adams seeks Irish American show of faith

Ian Katz in New York

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton, Liam Neeson and Angelica Houston all turned up last night to the glitzy Irish American bash at New York's Plaza Hotel but one absence was notable by his absence. The Sinn Fein leader, Gerry Adams, won't arrive in town till this morning.

The timing of Mr Adams' visit, sparing President Clinton the potential embarrassment of a public meeting, is an indication of the delicate line he will have to tread on what could be his most important trip to the United States since his first visit in 1984.

On one hand, Mr Adams desperately needs a show of faith from both the Clinton administration and the powerful Irish American community to strengthen his hand in his dealings with the IRA hard men.

On the other, he cannot afford to embarrass President Clinton, who has already struck his political neck out by granting him a visa in the face of mounting calls for Mr Adams to be frozen out until the IRA restores its ceasefire.

"Obviously the backdrop to his visit is starkly different to what it was when he came here in triumph last year," said Ray O'Hanlon, editor of the New York-based Irish Echo.

With leading figures such as Senator Edward Kennedy seeking to distance themselves from Mr Adams following last month's bombings, the Sinn Fein leader's friends here are eager to show he still has the backing of most Irish Americans.

"Overwhelmingly Irish Americans, if they have any interest at all in what's going on, are going to stay with him," said Pete King, a New York Republican congressman close to Mr

Adams. "People see him as needing support now more than at any time in the last few years."

Mr Adams starts his trip at a disadvantage because he is barred under the terms of his visa from raising money. That will prevent him taking home the most tangible form of support.

His six-day tour will take in New York, Washington and Scranton, Pennsylvania, home of a large Irish American community.

In Washington, Mr Adams will meet a number of congressmen and Christopher Dodd, the influential Connecticut senator. The Clinton administration has not ruled out the possibility of a lower level meeting.

Working closely with the national security adviser, Anthony Lake, or the White House Ireland expert, Nancy Soderberg.

The most diplomatically hairy moment of Mr Adams' visit may come on

Thursday when he is scheduled to attend a dinner for the American Ireland Fund in Washington.

Among the other guests are the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, as well as the Northern Ireland economic minister, Baroness Denton, and Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble, none of whom will want to be caught in the same frame sipping champagne with Mr Adams.

The Sinn Fein leader is scheduled to spend St Patrick's Day in Pennsylvania but there is speculation over whether he will march in New York's massive parade on Saturday.

Taking part would offer him the stage for a show of support but would risk exposure to those angered by the ending of the ceasefire.

"It would be an interesting test to walk up Fifth Avenue in front of maybe a million people and count the jeers and count the boos," said Mr O'Hanlon.

Docklands balks at joining 'ring of steel' around the City

Duncan Campbell and James Millie

PLANS to throw a "ring of steel" round the Isle of Dogs in East London after the Docklands bombing last month were given a mixed reception yesterday.

Discussions are under way to protect the area in the same way as the City, where cars are filmed by security cameras and armed police search vans and lorries at random.

London Docklands Development Corporation chief executive Eric Sorensen said yesterday: "The scheme is planned to act as a deterrent and to make businesses and residents of the area feel con-

fidant that measures are in place to prevent a repeat of last month's bomb."

Tony O'Regan, of Tower Hamlets borough council, said that no new measures would be undertaken without consultation with the local population.

He added: "There is a civil liberties aspect to it. Very few people live in the City, so their ring of steel is a completely different ball game from having your picture taken by security cameras day in day out as you go to and from your home."

Bedsit flats and maisonettes damaged in the Canary Wharf explosion may have to be demolished. Twelve families have already been rehoused and people living in 40 bedsits are also being found new accommodation.

Residents of the Barkentine estate may press for demolition of the four neighbouring 22-storey tower blocks. But Tower Hamlets council said it was not seeking to replace the blocks.

Prince renews trust in youth

David Ward

THE Prince of Wales relaunched his charities in one new body yesterday with a claim that Britain had to involve its rejected young people if the country's run-down urban areas were to be revived.

"We will never regenerate our inner cities until young people care about their communities and have a greater sense of citizenship," he told a conference in Manchester to launch the reconstructed Prince's Trust.

Unemployment, drug abuse, homelessness and under-achievement at school had barred many young people from playing their full part as citizens.

"We will never realise our full economic potential in this country until standards of education and training match those of our competitors."

The prince noted that 345,000 people aged between 16 and 25 were already resigned to unemployment, and that an estimated 100,000 unemployed school leavers had simply disappeared last year from employment, edu-

cation or social security records.

The Prince's Trust is seeking to offer more help. "Research has shown us two things," said a spokesman. "Young people are not as aware of us as we would like, and people are confused about what we do and how we are organised."

Four separate bodies — the Prince's Trust, the Prince's Youth Business Trust, the Prince's Trust Volunteers and the Prince of Wales's Committee — which have so far worked independently have been brought together in new premises in London and Cardiff.

"Under the single banner of the Prince's Trust we will now, I believe, be seen much more clearly as this country's leading organisation for enabling disadvantaged young people to reach their potential," Prince Charles told the 500 conference delegates.

The Prince's Trust, set up in 1976 to help disadvantaged young people, had applied for a grant from the Millennium Commission to promote study outside school to try to remedy under-performance by pupils.



Prince Charles at his charity relaunch. PHOTOGRAPH DAVID BAGO

Charles ensures his charities extend a helping hand

Vivek Chaudhary on the makings of a royal success

LAUNCHED in 1976 with a budget of £7,000, thanks to the fund-raising efforts of Eric Sykes and Sir Harry Secombe, the Prince's Trust has emerged as one of the largest charities in Britain aimed at helping disadvantaged youngsters.

This year the Prince's Trust, which comprises charities including Business in the Community and the Prince's Youth Business Trust, is expected to spend more than £24 million on its various projects. Around 4,000 businesses started by young people will

also be given grants. According to independent auditors, 80 per cent of the businesses established under the scheme still operate three years later and the scheme has emerged as the largest source of venture capital investing in young businesses in Britain.

Started in 1986, the Prince's Youth Business Trust has helped more than 27,000 youngsters set up their own business. An estimated 1,800 community groups and 50,000 individuals will also be given grants during the forthcoming financial year.

The Prince's Trust is aimed at helping young people aged between 14 and 25 and relies on 7,000 volunteers to liaise with them.

Its declared aim is to "help young people to succeed by

providing opportunities which they would otherwise not have."

Funding comes from private donors, large businesses, the European Union, local authorities and central government.

Tom Shebbeare, executive director of the Prince's Trust, said: "We have grown from a tiny organisation into one of the biggest charities in Britain. That's happened because no one does what we do as well. Our problem has been that young people don't know enough about the trusts and that's been a stumbling block to our development. We want to expand our volunteers programme and the prince is deeply involved in the work of the charities."

Prince's Trust is praised by fellow charities, some feel that until now it has been badly organised. One charity insider who worked closely with the Prince's Trust said: "There was a time when many donors felt that the Prince's Trust had a lack of focus and that its aims were too haphazard. There's also been rivalry between the different charities making up the trust. Rather than working towards one aim they've been competing over things like who can raise the most money. The result has been that the money has not always been getting through to the people who matter. The trust has achieved an awful lot and hopefully, this reorganisation will put an end to the problems it has had."

Woman 'starved in home of plenty'

A FORMER beauty queen starved to death at home on Christmas Day, even though the squalid council flat she shared with her husband and teenage son was well stocked with food, an inquest heard yesterday.

Kathleen Warburton, 54 — who weighed weighed three stone 13lbs — died on a filthy sofa from which she had not moved for six weeks, the inquest at Bristol was told.

Detective Sergeant David Jones, who went to the first floor flat in Ullswater Road, Bristol, on December 25 1994, said: "I could smell chicken roasting in the kitchen oven."

The mother of four, a former Miss West and model, was "skeletal," said Inspector Nigel Powell. She was found at home by her husband Keith, a 55-year-old sign-writer, who had last seen her the previous evening.

Pathologist Hugh White said Mrs Warburton died from bronchial pneumonia, starvation and neglect.

She was in an emaciated and filthy condition, but had no major organic disease.

Dr White noted that Mrs Warburton's husband and 19-year-old son were living in the same house. "The possibility of severe neglect must be explored," he said.

Det Sgt Jones said that in 1994, after a period of excessive drinking and tranquilliser addiction, Mrs Warburton became dependent on her husband and later confined herself to the house.

In 1993 her husband began an affair, and from the following January stayed at his lover's home until 11pm each night, a pattern which continued until his wife's death.

A doctor called in the district nurse after Mr Warburton telephoned in October 1994 to say he was unable to cope with his wife. Mrs Warburton's case was put into the care of Avon social services.

On December 8 1994 she refused a social worker's offer of a "cleaning blitz" and other help at home.

"But she did not rule out assisting in the kitchen oven," said Det Sgt Jones.

Gerald Russell, an eating disorder specialist, said Mrs Warburton had a history of emotional and psychiatric problems. She tended to lose weight when she was troubled or unwell.

After a stroke in 1997 there was a tendency to neglect herself and her flat.

"The most important contributory cause of her death was severe malnutrition," said Professor Russell. She suffered from a "severe form of self-neglect," he told the jury of five women and three men.

"It is likely self-neglect contributed in a major way to her failure to eat adequately," he said.

PC Scott Perry said Mr Warburton told him he had tried to bathe his wife once, but she was in too much pain. The inquest continues today.

Ex-prison union chief jailed

A FORMER prison officers' union leader was jailed for two years yesterday for embezzling £28,000 paid as death benefit to one of his members.

At an earlier hearing William Goodall, aged 47, of Eskbank, Lothian, had admitted taking the money in 1993

when he was general secretary of the Scottish Prison Officers' Association.

Yesterday at Edinburgh High Court Sheriff John Horsburgh, QC, refused a defence plea to sentence Goodall to community service which would be inadequate for "a serious breach of trust".

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6 WORLD NEWS

US reinforces naval fleet in Taiwanese waters

Martin Walker in Washington and Andrew Higgins in Quemy

The White House tried last night to cool the crisis triggered by its dispatch of a second aircraft carrier task force to Taiwan...

being "tested by Beijing" in an election year. As the People's Liberation Army (PLA) prepared for large-scale exercises today...

Though scorned by US diplomatic recognition and troops since 1979, Taiwan is a well-armed and wealthy nation of 21 million and remains effectively under Washington's security umbrella in Asia.

Clinton has been forced to draw a military line he would rather have left blurred

Taiwan reacted coolly, saying this would only encourage Beijing to use military intimidation again and make it "ask for more" later.

and could in theory destroy any Chinese missiles threatening Taiwan. The two task forces, along with US submarines now on station off Taiwan, carry more than 200 Tomahawk cruise missiles, as well as two air wings.

One China too many, page 8

China fears the island will quietly slip away

John Gittings

CHINA has never renounced the right to use force against Taiwan - which it regards as an internal affair. Sino-US talks in the 1950s foundered because the US insisted on renunciation.

Japan sets softly, softly course in a sea of trouble

Nicholas Kristof in Tokyo

EAST ASIAN countries are deeply concerned about the Chinese missile tests near Taiwan, but they are avoiding any strong criticism for fear of offending China.

would be easy to take militarily, and their capture could be presented by Beijing as a victory over Japan, to drum up nationalist support.

Some military experts fear that China might try to seize a Taiwan-claimed island as a show of force. The Senkakus



Prisoner of peace... An Israeli soldier sits with a man arrested in a raid on a Palestinian village

Anti-terrorist summit points to Middle East fault lines

Derek Brown in Jerusalem

TOMORROW'S international summit meeting in Egypt, which the United States had hoped would be a gesture of global solidarity in the face of anti-Israel terrorism, is likely to be little more than a public display of the continuing bitter disputes of the Middle East.

campaign, in which continued Jewish support could be vital. Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak, who is jointly hosting the meeting with Mr Clinton, underlined the differing priorities of the summit...

by John Major, Jacques Chirac of France, Helmut Kohl of Germany, John Bruton of Ireland, Lamberto Dini of Italy, Felipe Gonzalez of Spain, and Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway.

ting back at the Islamist militants and to urge him to do more. For Mr Arafat, it will offer another chance to appeal for aid. Israel's blockade of the Palestinians in the wake of the bombings has led to an alarming shortage of food and medicines.

Since the late 1970s, however, China has suggested that the use of force is a remote possibility. Instead Beijing leaders have stressed the road of "peaceful reunification".

One of the target zones is less than 40 miles from the Japanese island of Yonaguni, nearly as close as it is to Taiwan. But the Japanese government is playing down its worries and taking a low-key stance.

Some military experts fear that China might try to seize a Taiwan-claimed island as a show of force. The Senkakus

Some military experts fear that China might try to seize a Taiwan-claimed island as a show of force. The Senkakus



Australia's new PM refuses to give allegiance to Charles

Agencies in Sydney

AUSTRALIA'S new conservative prime minister, John Howard, a declared monarchist, declined to swear allegiance to the "heirs and successors" of the Queen when he took office yesterday.

Police tum tables on Karachi terror groups

The bullet reigns in Pakistan capital, writes Suzanne Goldenberg

THE TRAIL of blood started in the corner of a room behind a television set where one of Pakistan's most wanted men cowered. Paramilitary forces shot him dead in front of his wife and baby, then dragged his corpse through the hallway and into the road.

near the doorstep of his home suggest his fate. "Tell me, tell me, how they could have been killed in an encounter," his sister said.

bloodletting - it has been the turn of MQM militants to die. Karachi's police chief, Muhammad Shoaib Suddle, said more than 1,000 had been put out of action.

News in brief

Rao survives MPs' threat: The Indian prime minister, P. V. Narasimha Rao, survived an opposition move yesterday to expel him from parliament when the Speaker of the lower house, Shivraj Patil, dismissed their petition.

Papers suspended: Gambia's seven independent newspapers have suspended publication pending approval from the military government under new conditions which include a \$10,000 bond, editors said yesterday. - Reuter.

Joint exercises: Ukraine and Germany began their first joint military exercises near Dnipropetrovsk, south of Kiev, yesterday under Nato's Partnership for Peace programme. - AP.

Tito's yacht sale: Galeb (Seagull), a yacht which belonged to Tito, will be put on auction at a starting price of \$2 million, Montenegro's government said yesterday. - AP.

Vice crackdown: Vienna is to crack down on illegal prostitution with tougher laws to combat the spread of venereal disease, a city councillor, Johann Hatzl, said. Prostitution is legal in Austria and prostitutes must register with the state and pay taxes. - Reuter.

Treatment for Lee: Singapore's patriarch, Lee Kuan Yew, aged 73, will undergo heart treatment this week for the second time in three months, state television said. - Reuter.

Gas pipe blast: A section of gas pipeline in Dagestan near the Caspian Sea has exploded, leaving nine of the 39 Dagestani regions without supplies for heating or cooking. - Reuter.

Crash victims: Eighteen people were killed and 26 injured when an express train ploughed into a

Car insurance over £300? Call Admiral now 0800 600 800

Handwritten signature or scribble at the bottom of the page.

Chris McGreal reports on the spinal meningitis epidemic that has killed 3,000 in northern Nigeria

Death takes a costly minibus

WUDIL Cottage Hospital is just 10 miles from Maimuna Suleiman's village. Yet it was days after her violent coughs offered the first hint of potential doom that the 4-year-old Nigerian girl was finally carried into the one place that could save her.

Maimuna's mother, Hadiza, took her first to Gerko village dispensary, but no one there recognised the child's condition. Only when she returned the next day did the nurse refer her to the cottage hospital. But it was a Friday, the holy day in Islamic northern Nigeria. And then came the weekend. So Hadiza waited.

"I didn't think the hospital would be open," she said. "All the government offices are closed at the weekend."

On Monday Hadiza finally lifted her rapidly deteriorat-

ing daughter and went in search of transport. That proved another obstacle. Buses can be hard to find and a fuel scarcity has doubled the price of a journey. Hadiza had to bargain to get a fare she could afford.

By the time she and Maimuna finally joined the queue at Wudil Cottage Hospital, a crop of spartan concrete bungalows, her child was on the brink of death. The doctor recognised the illness immediately. Another case in the spinal meningitis outbreak that is sweeping northern Nigeria. So far, the disease has claimed about 3,000 lives. Almost all of them are children who die within days of contracting the disease. Maimuna had the added complication of gastroenteritis.

The nurse tending her, Sa'el Mohammed, said some children never make it to the

hospital because transport is difficult to find in rural areas, and expensive. Other families fear they do not have the money to pay the hospital, not knowing that treatment is free now that foreign donations of drugs are arriving.

"A lot of people are dying

propped up on the back of motorbike taxis, or half a dozen at a time laid out in minibuses.

Maimuna's name is registered in the pages of meningitis admissions since January. On Saturday Wudil Cottage Hospital was treating 99 cases

The hospital was swamped long before Maimuna arrived. She was put in a makeshift ward in what had been an open shed — now protected with wicker mats stretched around the outside. Even that is not enough to meet demand. A dozen patients lie outside.

Mr Mohammed and the five other nurses on duty cannot keep up with the demand, any more than the only doctor, who was sent by the government of neighbouring Niger. At night there is no doctor at all. Emergency care is left to the nurses.

But no one is abandoned. All arrive with some relative carrying essential utensils — pots, kettles and prayer mats — who will also go in search of food.

Anxious relatives spend their days fanning patients in an effort to ease the searing,

dry heat which caused the meningitis outbreak. An elderly mother and father gently fed their daughter water with a spoon. Occasionally she took it. Another man struggled to preserve a young woman's modesty by trying to keep her almost naked body wrapped as she thrashed about in pain.

Maimuna survived, to Mr Mohammed's surprise. As Hadiza gave thanks for her daughter's life, a battered white minibus drew up. A man in his twenties gently pulled a marginally younger woman from the seat, cradled her and then stumbled to wait his turn on a wooden bench outside the doctor's office.

One of the nurses looked at the woman, shook her head and commented that it was sad that people were leaving it so long before coming to the hospital.

'A lot of people are dying along the road because of problems with transport'

along the road before they get here because of the complications with transport," Mr Mohammed said. "They are coming from as far as 30 miles away. If they have money they charter any vehicle to get here. But some just don't make it. They just don't have the money and they leave it too late."

Patients have arrived

nearly twice the number of just two days earlier. There is also gastroenteritis, which some fear may really be cholera, and scattered cases of measles, which Wudil has no medicines to combat.

Each page of the register includes names marked "died on admission". Eighteen deaths have been recorded at the cottage hospital alone.

Americans stay quiet about Bosnia pull-out

European concern about the timetable for withdrawal of Nato is being stifled, reports David Fairhall

NATO's loudly declared determination to pull out of Bosnia at the end of the year is becoming a little muffled.

While the official policy remains unchanged — that the 60,000-strong peace implementation force I-For will stay for 22 weeks and not a day longer — there is a growing private acceptance that some sort of follow-on force may be needed to protect the fragile settlement.

In Brussels, military planners are already working on alternative "exit strategies". But public discussion is taboo. Partly this is in deference to Washington, where it is a presidential imperative in election year that US troops are on their way home before Christmas.

Partly it is a fear that talk of staying on beyond the Dayton accord deadline will become self-fulfilling.

One diplomat said it reminded him of a phrase the French once used about the sensitive question of Alsace-Lorraine: "Y démission, nous n'en parlons jamais" (Always think about it, never talk about it).

The I-For commander, US Admiral Leighton Smith, is prepared to discuss almost any other aspect of the operation. Interviewed in London last week, he conceded that there might be a follow-on force, but emphasised that the decision was not his. As a military man, he would merely make a vague statement "when the time is right".

Other Nato officials repeat the agreed mantra: "In together, stay together, leave together." Privately, however, they admit that cracks have appeared in the diplomatic facade. The British, particularly, do not have the Americans' confidence that it will be sensible to pull the entire force out. "Having put so much into Bosnia, we don't want to throw it away," one source said.

And yet there are grim memories in London of trying to make the United Nations peacekeeping operation work without Washington's support and without its troops committed on the ground.

This is a powerful argument for the Europeans to

leave when the Americans decide to go. But there is interest, especially in Paris, in the idea of using the Western European Union to sponsor a follow-on force.

This would be the first test of the WEU's developing military structure, which the British government is pledged to strengthen during its current presidency. It would also make use of arrangements for the European organisation to employ Nato's (often American) assets, such as intelligence satellites and heavy transport aircraft.

While the debate continues, the Nato-led I-For is putting together, if not an alternative withdrawal plan, then at least a timetable for deciding on it. British commanders reach a milestone in June when the six-monthly rotation of their forces provides an opportunity to make structural changes.

Also in June, Nato foreign ministers meet in Berlin to

assess progress in crucial areas such as civilian reconstruction, elections, and consolidation of the suspect Croats. "A declaration of I-For has not decided how to support the elections, which are promised between June and mid-September, but with thousands of polling points the allies are agreed that "a commanding presence" will be required at least until the elections are over.

As autumn sets in, Brussels will have to choose between several withdrawal options, which by then will come with military plans attached. The underlying calculation is that I-For needs 100 days to complete the pull-out. If the deadline is still Christmas, the first columns must be on the move by October.

For the moment, Admiral Smith declares himself satisfied with the first phase of the I-For operation, but expresses concern about the fragility of the Croat-Muslim federation. He also urges the development of a civilian infrastructure to replace I-For.

In Brussels there are doubts whether that can be achieved by the deadline. Equally, there is a strong desire to make a clean break if possible. One source summed up the mood: "Either we succeed and we go, or we fail and we go."

Officials admit that cracks have appeared in the diplomatic facade

Commanding sights... Workers enjoy the view yesterday from the mouth of the Merlion statue, combining a mermaid with a lion, being built on the resort island of Sentosa, Singapore. It is due to open next month. PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN DRAKE



Commanding sights... Workers enjoy the view yesterday from the mouth of the Merlion statue, combining a mermaid with a lion, being built on the resort island of Sentosa, Singapore. It is due to open next month. PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN DRAKE

Panic Attacks?

(Special) If you suffer panic attacks or general anxiety that cause symptoms such as dizziness or feeling faint, rapid heartbeat, feelings of unreality, fear of losing control or dying, shortness of breath, sweating, nausea or upset stomach, you need to get a copy of the new book *How to Overcome Anxieties, Panic Attacks & Phobias*.

The book contains the latest information on panic and general anxiety disorders — what causes problems, how best to treat the problem, and how to protect yourself from troublesome panic and anxiety distress.

The book gives you specific facts on the latest natural, alternative and medical remedies that can bring prompt and lasting relief. You'll discover what you can do to stop panic attacks and anxiety, the basic cause of the problem, and what to avoid at all costs.

The book covers actual case

histories of people who suffered panic and general anxiety problems and how they were able to overcome their problems.

Many people are putting up with troublesome panic attacks, general anxiety and phobias because they are unaware of new treatments and the welcome relief that is now available.

Get all the facts. To order your copy of *How to Overcome Anxieties, Panic Attacks & Phobias* send your name, address and book title with payment (cheque or Visa/Access with expiry date) of £9.95 which includes postage and handling to Carolee plc, Dept 0445, Alford, Leicestershire, E07 8AP, or telephone their 24 hour order line on 01206 825600 (quoting reference 0445). Allow up to 14 days for delivery. You may return the book any time within three months for a full refund if not satisfied.

One killed as motorcycle gang feud flares into shooting war

Greg Molver in Stockholm

SCANDINAVIAN police said yesterday they were bracing themselves for a "war" between feuding motorcycle gangs after one man died and four were wounded in gun battles at Copenhagen and Oslo airports between rival Hells Angels and Bandidos.

The shooting incidents, which caused panic among passengers and sparked an international police alert, is the most serious outbreak of violence yet in an escalating conflict between the gangs.

Last week three Bandidos were injured in an exchange of fire with Hells Angels in the Swedish town of Helsingborg. The day before a Hells Angels member escaped death after discovering a bomb under his car bonnet.

Sunday's victims were all members of the Bandidos, which established itself as rivals to the Hells Angels in Scandinavia two years ago. The men, who were returning from a weekend

Corsican nationalists take violence to Paris with attack

Alex Duval Smith in Paris

THE bloody 20-year campaign of Corsican nationalist violence yesterday appeared to be spreading to mainland France with news that the Parisian home of an investigative journalist had come under machine-gun fire.

In the first mainland guerrilla attack by Corsican nationalists, Guy Benhamou, a journalist for the daily paper *Liberation*, escaped unhurt when his house was riddled with bullets last Friday evening.

Responsibility was not claimed, but police said the attack bore the hallmarks of Corsican nationalists. Mr Benhamou, the newspaper's Corsica specialist, has recently revealed links between the French government and hardline elements on the Mediterranean island.

Sources feared the attack could be the first in a series responding to new, divisive policies by the French government to control violence. Attacks linked to three armed groups have claimed more than 40 lives on the island in

Wanted Rwandan arrested

CAMEROON has arrested the late Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana's chief of presidential staff, who is wanted by the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

Colonel Theoneste Bagosora is wanted by the tribunal in connection with the April 1994 deaths of 10 Belgian soldiers protecting the former Rwandan prime minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana.

The state prosecutor's office, which ordered the arrest, declined to comment on what would happen to Col Bagosora, who has been in Cameroon since September 1995.

The war crimes tribunal has so far indicted 10 Rwandans in connection with the deaths of up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in the genocide after Habyarimana's plane was shot down in April 1994. — *Reuter, Yaounde.*

Cougars on the streets

COUGARS still roaming rural parts of California have crept into the suburbs to become the centre of controversy between hunters and environmentalists.

The deadly big cats — also called pumas or mountain lion — attacks have killed two women joggers in 1994, carried off people's cats, and ate a poodle in a mountain village. They have also been seen strutting through a car park and suburban gardens in San Diego.

Cougars, numbering up to 10,000 in California, have been protected since 1990. Then voters overwhelmingly passed a state referendum decreasing that the animals could be killed only if they attacked: it could be proved they were menacing humans, pets or livestock. By 1994 game wardens had shot 120, an annual kill that has risen by about eight a year since the referendum.

Now another proposition is on the ballot later this month which would permit licensed sportsmen to cull the animals. However, environmentalists argue that the measure comes from trophy hunters and gun owners eager to put cougar heads over their fireplaces. — *Christopher Reed, Los Angeles.*

News in brief

Iraq blocks UN inspection of site

IRAQ blocked United Nations inspectors from examining a site near Baghdad yesterday, apparently in fear that they might uncover more evidence of plans for weapons of mass destruction.

The incident followed a similar one last Friday and came as Iraq and the UN began new talks on a deal to buy food in exchange for limited oil sales.

"We think the UN inspectors are looking in the right places — where the Iraqis have hidden damaging material," a Foreign Office official said. "They're hitting the right buttons." Previous disclosures badly damaged Iraqi hopes for a lifting of sanctions.

The food-for-oil talks centre on a UN offer last April to allow Iraq to sell \$1 billion worth of oil every 90 days to buy humanitarian goods and alleviate the effects of sanctions. — *Jan Black.*

23 police die in Tiger ambush

A 300-STRONG force of Tamil Tiger rebels killed 23 police, including 15 commandos, yesterday after luring them out of their post in eastern Sri Lanka, security sources said. It was the highest death toll in weeks of skirmishes.

The police were acting on information that a large group of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had gathered for an attack on a village in eastern Batticaloa district. After arriving at an open space between two paddy fields, they were ambushed, army sources said.

Two commando inspectors and a sub-inspector were among the dead. Twelve constables, seven reserve constables and a reserve sub-inspector were also killed and four police were wounded. The rebels lost 20 fighters, the sources said. — *Reuter, Colombo.*

Drunk Russians sell tank

RUSSIAN troops sold a tank and armoured combat vehicle to Chechen rebels after a drinking binge, Interfax news agency said yesterday. The soldiers, belonging to the 106th motor-rifle division based in the east of Chechnya, parted with the heavy equipment for \$5,000 after getting drunk with rebels loyal to the separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, the agency said.

Interfax, quoting a military counter-intelligence official for the report, said an investigation was under way. — *Reuter, Moscow.*

Former presidents go on trial

BOORED from the public gallery and taunted with a cry of "sons of bitches", two former South Korean presidents appeared side-by-side in a Seoul court yesterday to face charges of mutiny and sedition.

Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-woo, former generals, face the death sentence if convicted. They appeared in court with 14 other former senior military officers.

Mr Chun is accused of plotting for masterminding a 1979 coup that gave him and his predecessor Mr Roh a grip on the presidency for 13 years from 1980 to 1988. Mr Roh is charged with aiding Mr Chun stage the putsch that followed the assassination of the strongman Park Chung-hee. The two have also been indicted for sedition in connection with a 1980 army massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators.

Dozens of protesters screaming obscenities and demanding heavy punishment scuffled with police outside. — *Reuter, Seoul.*

Andean bloc formed

FIVE Latin American presidents have approved the creation of an Andean Community economic bloc to replace the 28-year-old Andean Pact trade group. They said the new bloc, comprising Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, would seek economic and political harmony along the lines of the European Union.

"We agreed to take a great leap forward to build from the Andean Pact a superior entity, the Andean Community," President Alberto Fujimori of Peru said after the summit. — *Reuter, Trujillo, Peru.*

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'Goya' sparks detective hunt

THE discovery of a religious painting in Franco's torture chambers has prompted a detective hunt to establish its origins. Workmen stumbled on it, covered in dust, in a locked basement room of a palazzo in the Puerta del Sol which was the headquarters of Franco's secret police.

Experts initially attributed it to Goya. "It's a corker of a Goya," said José María Luzón, director of the Prado museum, when the canvas, which shows saints pleading for the souls in purgatory, was unveiled.

"It is a particularly significant find and could not have come at a better time in the run-up to celebrations of the 250th anniversary of Goya's birth this year," said the regional president, Alberto Ruiz Gallardón, adding that there was no doubt about its authenticity.

But even though the painting is signed by Goya, rival experts disagreed. "Everyone has got carried away," said Alfonso Pérez Sánchez, a former director of the Prado, who argued that the painting was more likely to be the work of a lesser known artist, Salvador Maella.

A large Goya showing a religious scene would be worth about 2,000 million pesetas (£11 million), 200 times the amount a Maella would fetch. — *Adela Gooch, Madrid.*

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A lifeline for small firms
But they need macro-economic help even more

WHILE the shares of large companies were in free fall all over the world yesterday, the stock of small companies in Britain rose as the Prime Minister declared them a zone of urgent priority for reform. Small businesses, he said, were not some minority interest but the backbone of the economy and the main source of future jobs. At a London conference he unveiled measures — from curbing late payment of bills to pledges to abolish inheritance and capital gains tax — which were greeted as a "bullseye" by the CBI.

It is easy to be cynical because yesterday's measures were announced 17 years after the Government took office and shortly before a general election. Inevitably they become entangled with the Government's desperate desire not to cede more of the small business vote to the Liberal Democrats and a rejuvenated Labour Party. But on the central issue — the vital importance of small firms — Mr Major is dead right. At a time when large manufacturing companies are planning to shed yet more labour and when the job-generating ability of service industries is fading, it is of paramount importance to establish more small firms and — just as important — to ensure that small ones make the transition to bigger ones. Many small companies would love to have the luxury of being big enough to watch with equanimity when their shares fall by billions as happened yesterday. The shake-out in world stock markets was triggered by news that the US created 705,000 new jobs in a single month. That compares with 128,000 in the UK in a whole year (of which only 30,000 were in manufacturing). The markets fell because they took this news as evidence that the US recovery was too strong, even though many of the same people were worried that the recovery was too weak barely weeks ago.

John Major dropped from yesterday's

speech any reference to the Government's reported plans to abolish basic workers' rights in small business, and to make it even easier than it is already to fire people. Thank goodness too. It is one thing to strip red tape from small companies, quite another to encourage them to treat their employees like cattle. Small businesses thrive best if they are part of an implicit contract which treats customers and employees as stakeholders in the company. By all means sweep away unnecessary procedures, legislate against late payment of bills and streamline taxation, but small companies must realise that they too have duties to fulfill in return — including paying over their just share of taxation. It is their own interest to contribute to the financing of education, health and employment on which their own long-term future depends.

Government should remember that the best way it can assist small firms is by creating a stable macro-economic environment. Small businesses have suffered disproportionately and avoidably from two unnecessarily steep recessions at the start and the end of the eighties. Interest rates (and the value of the pound) were driven up to absurdly high levels, bankrupting in the process tens of thousands of small firms which could have survived in less demanding circumstances. The punitive levels of interest — and a reluctance to pay bills on time — created a situation in which linked companies went down like a line of dominoes. This is why the Government lost so many votes among normally loyal small business people. What matters now is not yesterday's charter but whether a newly elected government, Labour or Conservative, will give the small business sector the continuing priority it deserves once the election is out of the way. Recent experience is not encouraging.

The new age of grammar schools

And pigs might fly and rivers might one day run uphill...

SERIOUS policy-making is over. An election approaches. It is time for gimmicks. Indeed, it is time to take policy-making out of the hands of cabinet ministers and their departments who are supposed to be responsible for administering services and place it in the hands of unknown political acolytes in Downing Street's policy unit. And so it was that the mouthpiece of Central Conservative Office — the Sunday Express — reported a "dramatic" Tory move for a new wave of grammar schools in scores of towns across the country with the Times and Telegraph following suit by making the proposal their main story yesterday. The Prime Minister is reported to be ready to make the plan the highlight of the next Tory election manifesto — convinced new ideas on education are the key to winning the next election.

So will it happen? No. If ever a proposal looked ready to win the Colander Cup for the poorest thought out policy of the year, this grammar gimmick looks well placed. The idea is that parents will get together with local businesses to create a new generation of grammars. In some cities the new schools would take over "failed" comprehensives and in others new ones would be built — to spare the Government from the initial multi-million pound construction costs. Now think of the implications. Who would organise the parents? How would parental demand be measured? Why should local businesses put up money when 77 of the

100 biggest firms approached by ministers in booming 1987 turned down the idea of funding an earlier pre-election gimmick: 20 city technology colleges with the remit of becoming "beacons of excellence"?

Just suppose new grammars did emerge in every town. What would happen then? Presumably, where they took over from "failed" comprehensives, new grammars would proceed to stabilise remaining comprehensives turning some of them into sink schools as better pupils were siphoned off. Where new schools were built, eagle-eyed Audit Commission inspectors would have a field day asking why new schools were being built when there were almost one million surplus school places. Parliament's watchdog on public expenditure would want to know who thought private sector built schools would save money. Meanwhile, the 80 per cent of parents who could not get their children into the new grammars would be in revolt.

No wonder the Education Secretary is resisting the idea. The last thing our school system needs now — after a decade of upheaval and change — is more upheaval. Ministers were supposed to have accepted the plea from Sir Ron Dearing, the man who brought peace back to the classroom, for a period of stability. Last Friday, Labour was 37 per cent ahead of the Tories in Gallup's survey of public credibility on education. Gimmicks won't close this gap.

Balliol and Dr Flick's endowment

The college is right to accept the money for a Professorship

ONLY one thing exceeds the readiness of the world's wealthiest industrialists to give their money to Oxbridge colleges, and that is the eagerness of those same colleges to accept it from them. The colleges have always depended upon the generosity of the rich to maintain them in the style to which they are accustomed and, the world being what it is, it is not surprising that some bequests come from more morally questionable sources than others.

There must have been a time, for example, when the huge generosity of Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit towards the university could have been a source of serious moral embarrassment to Oxford. There was, without doubt, African blood on these massive bequests, however equitably they have subsequently been spent. With the passing of the years these arguments have become less powerful and the educational usefulness of the bequests more obvious.

These arguments have now resurfaced in the debate as to whether Balliol College should accept money from the Flick family to endow a chair in European Thought. Those who oppose the endowment say, correctly, that the Flicks were among the most prominent employers of slave labour during the Third Reich. Those who support it say, equally correctly, that 50 years have passed and that the sins of the fathers should not be visited upon their sons.

Every endowment raises questions of this kind. The purpose of such money can never be divorced from its source, a point which beneficiaries should always carefully assess. It is beyond doubt that the Flick family has a very guilty past. But they also have an entirely honourable present and it is hard to see how a society which places no restrictions on Mercedes-Benz cars can logically object to the family's charitable bequests.



Letters to the Editor

That business of workers' rights

House of charades

CLARLY the Government is now considering removing the employment rights of 10 million of our fellow citizens employed by small businesses (Leader, March 9). Their hesitation has doubtless to do with their small majority and the proximity of a general election.

However, it will be recalled that the Government did not hesitate in removing the rights of the lowest paid to minimum wages fixed by the statutory Wages Councils, nor in removing from all workers the host of other employment rights, achieved by the Employment Rights Act 1996. Indeed the Government boasts of the fact that its citizens are the worst protected employees in Europe: "The UK has the least onerous labour regulations in any western industrialised state" (Poverty and Income Inequality in the UK have

grown at a faster rate than any other European country. Deregulation of the labour market, coupled with extensive policies of privatisation, encourage bad employers to compete on the basis of cutting costs. Increasingly, these cuts are made by reducing staff, reducing training, restricting employment rights and cutting back on pay and conditions. Removing the limited standards that remain encourages this downward spiral and does nothing to create jobs.

Small businesses (and their employees) would be better assisted by developing a floor of employment rights based on internationally agreed standards below which no worker or job-seeker could be forced to go. Companies wanting to develop long term investment and recruitment policies could then do so, secure in the knowledge that their efforts will not be undermined by rogue employers surviving by undercutting minimum standards.

In slashing employees' rights in the past, the Government has been routinely con-

demned for breach of its international legal obligations by the International Labour Organisation and by the European Court of Justice. If it removes all employment rights from employees in small firms it will breach yet more European Directives, ILO Conventions and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

John Heady QC, Chairperson, Carolyn Jones, Director, Institute of Employment Rights, 180 Falcon Road, London SW11 2LN.

IT strikes as a little rich that Michael Heseltine should decide that the best way to give impetus to small businesses is to cut employment rights rather than, say, to encourage quicker payment of debts owed to ease cash flows.

Nonetheless it may open up a much needed debate on the role of labour rights as human rights. That is the right of every worker to be free from insidious and

demeaning discrimination and from dismissal at the whim of an employer is surely as much a human right as the right to practice one's religion of choice or freely to express one's views, all jointly integral to personal existence and development. That the Cabinet rift should come in the wake of the Europe-ASEAN talks adds all the more to the irony.

Practically, it seems unlikely that the proposals would have created more jobs; more that it would have created a larger lumpen proletariat from which employers could choose workers selectively on daily unsecured contracts, sacking at will but never actually increasing the sum total of jobs within the economy. Which MD would want to expand past 20 employees with the knock-on effects and why would an employee choose (or rather be forced to choose) such an employer, forgoing all protection?

David Mead, University College Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.

JOHN Cole's lament for the death of serious coverage of Parliamentary debates (Arena, March 4) underestimates the public's disdain for Parliamentary politics, and its language of leaks, embarrassment, denials and the simple arithmetic of victory or defeat as a substitute for real accountability. To the rest of us, the acres of space wasted reporting these games is like fiddling while Rome burns, as we watch the unnecessary death of our towns, public transport, and ill relatives for whom there are no beds.

Politicians and reporters feed the illusion that narrow victories or defeats mean something. They seem trapped in an episode of The House of Cards — the UK equivalent of the Washington "inside the beltway" syndrome — that blinds politicians and reporters to the importance of wider issues than the next morning's headlines. But they could refuse to accept soundbites and jockeying for position within a party as "news".

If Ministers and reporters saw the repercussions of politics in relation to its real impact on our lives, on our high streets, and on the choices open to us about where to live, travel, work, and send our children to school, issues like the privatisation of the railways would be today's poll tax, galvanising the nation to insist on a coherent transport policy, not languishing somewhere down the political agenda behind the latest Westminster gossip. Tony Blair says he wants to raise the tone of political debate. But with an election ahead, will his ministers and the media have the courage to allow him to do so?

Roger Graef, 71 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2 9EB.

Unwin undead

MICHAEL WHITE'S reference to Paddy Ashdown (March 11) to Paddy Ashdown's typing style was an unfortunate pre-emption or "jumpy gunload" of Professor Stanley Unwin's demise. In fact I had the pleasure of lunching with the professor today (burpy-punch) and can testify that, at the age of 84, he is as creative as ever. He took part recently in a TV series for Channel 4 and is presently considering an offer to make his first CD. So please squirm! I from the coffin-thorax if you would!

Michael Pointon, 11 Kings Court, London SW19 9QP.

Nelson's column

PRESIDENT Mandela cannot win. If he delegates, he will be criticised for losing his grip. Yet when he does his job as the executive President he is, we have David Beresford (South Africa's old hand) on a Britain the Preferred Location, DTT 1995) suggesting he is "developing in his advancing years a taste for power... and that "his dominance of public life could stunt the embryonic political system".

President Mandela is not a titular president. He is hands-on as necessary. His record, reputation and actions belie any thought that he is power-seeking. His pointed interventions are the more necessary in view of the tricky challenges faced in transforming South Africa from apartheid to democracy.

He is undoubtedly one of the finest septuagenarians on political record.

The "taste for power" tag plays on an archaic northern hemisphere phobia that the Guardian knows all about the superior belief, nurtured in lesser papers, that African leaders are power-seeking and worse. The Guardian, which I have read with enthusiasm all my life, has never been part of that lot. Why not keep it that way?

Prof Eader Asmal MP, Minister, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South African Government of National Unity, Private Bag 29062, Cape Town 8000.



Feeding (on) the pigeons

IN Trafalgar Square, we have a magnificent civic space, redolent with historic association, yet its outer edges are thronged with heavy traffic, and the pollution arising from those vehicles is all too evident, especially in summer (Leader, March 9). The middle of the square is crowded with feral pigeons. Can such an environment be healthy for us, much less for our children?

I understand, incidentally, that Trafalgar Square is the only public square in Westminster where pigeon feeding is permitted. Is this any longer appropriate?

Michael Gwilliam, Director, Civic Trust, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AW.

Council reports that "field sports such as shooting, coursing and beagling... are not believed to pose a threat to the national hare population." It also mentions the positive contribution that game keepers make to hare numbers.

Where there is coursing there are always game keepers. They make sure there are always hares. Restricting or banning coursing would disrupt this triangle of hare conservation. The species would become further threatened by its greatest foe: modern agricultural practices and fox predation.

Here is the central weakness of the hare conservation movement: it is not underpinned by sound conservation principles but by an extremist political philosophy which has little to do with the species they are trying to protect.

John Gardner, Director, Political Affairs, British Field Sports Society, 59 Kennington Road, London SE1 7PZ.

Age of irony

READ Mark Lawson's agest piece with the chagrin of one who, in 1980, played Trevor Nunn's twin — I was Viola to his Sebastian. Is this the same Mark Lawson who, in an account of his own inability to pass his driving test, described me as having passed mine "in late middle age"? I was 43 at the time. If he really is only 33, he has a long way to go in the next decade.

Margaret Drabble (aged 55), 21 Marks Road, London W10.

A Country Diary

SOMERSET: Familiar sights and surroundings (and not just the hopeful crocuses in the garden) struck our eyes with extra sparkle after a time far from home, in places where sky and grass were unfamiliar colours: trees and shrubs were unfamiliar shapes, and ferns, like ferns, were strange and exotic. Sunshine obligingly lit south Somerset hillsides a green that looked especially vivid after the dun-coloured planes and hills of north east Victoria. Just a short time ago, a journey by antique steam train up to the Dandenong ranges outside Melbourne had taken us past what looked like (and in Somerset would have been) a vineyard, but the produce turned out to be not grapes but Kiwi fruit. The Dandenongs are lush, jungle country, watered by streams that flow into Port Phillip, in part sub-temperate rain-forest, where Platypus and Lyre-birds live, largely unseen. Gum-trees and tree-fern crowd in on the winding railway line. There are grey gums, manna-gums, silverleaf

stringybarks, and, most striking of all, the gum known as mountain ash. In late summer, when it has sloughed off the old bark, it stands out amongst the greys and browns, tall, straight, and striped almost white. Somerset sheep look plump, very white, and rather pleased with themselves after the lean, dusty merinos stretched across miles of brown Australian grass that looks, to an English eye, dry and unappealing. You can understand why early European painters of the Australian landscape failed. The English palette would not work there. The country store in the tiny hamlet of Thoonas, near Glenrowan, makes another kind of contrast: bare floorboards, basic groceries in battered tins ranged on wooden shelves around the walls, a single petrol pump outside and the odd customer every hour or so on first-name terms with the owner, who has a toddler on her hip as she minds the store and works the pump.

JOHN VALLINS

Maggie at war

NOTICE that in Baroness Thatcher's speech in Fulton, Missouri, (March 9) she warns of the military dangers posed by unstable megalomaniacs.

Leaving aside the temptation to ask her to examine the mole in her own eye, I cannot however but ponder on her sudden realisation that these are indeed dangerous people who were no less so when, as Prime Minister, she did all she could to encourage the sale of arms to them.

Perhaps we should see her latest offering in the same light, for the construction of Star Wars II could not help but boost the profits of the very same people in the military hardware business.

Less from Lady, more brass

Brian Bethell, 3 Cherry Drive, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8HF.

The Hitchens post (continued)

THEY say confession is good for the soul, so let me hold my hands up and admit I gave Peter Hitchens his first job in journalism. So hurl your nut outlets at me, Guardian readers. Back in the early 1970s, when the International Socialists were a power in the land, I was editor of Socialist Worker. Christopher Hitchens, an IS stalwart, asked me if I would give his younger brother some reporting work as he was anxious to break into journalism.

The young Hitchens was dour, unsmiling and, journalistically speaking, was about as much use as a ruptured balloon at a party. I was relieved when, after just a few weeks, he found a job on a weekly paper in the West Country. Pity he didn't stay there.

Roger Protz, 139 Charnmouth Road, St Albans AL1 4SG.

REMEMBER Hitchens 25 years ago at York University as a caricature of a "wide-eyed Trot from the lunatic fringe". It was a foolhardy individual who talked to him about his political views then for fear of being ranted at at great length and tedium.

He appears surprised at the force of Guardian readers' response to his dirt-digging on Cherie Booth. He obviously underestimates our anger at being faced with another general election that will be won or lost on smears about politicians's families that have been orchestrated by the likes of him.

Cath Tate, 45 Morrish Road, London SW2 4EE.

Please include a full postal address, even on e-mailed letters, and a telephone number. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear.

Diary

Matthew Norman

In response to the appeal for memories of Peter Bitchens in his pre-Express, Trotskyite days, the metaphorical postbag bulges. Taking time away from the hunt for red Cherie, Peter himself called to offer help. Alas, he seems too unreliable a source to be trusted: his denial of a heard while an International Socialist in the early 1970s was swiftly contradicted by the arrival of a picture showing him addressing the proletariat from a soap-box. Meanwhile, a fellow student at York University recalled him organising a pro-Republican demo after Bloody Sunday, and sending car loads of students into pit villages during the miner's strike. "He had no sense of humour at all," said the caller, "and Harriet Hartman was known as the two most boring, pe-faced people in York — he because of his fanaticism, she because she was such a goody-two-shoes. They were the only ones who didn't smoke dope." Tomorrow, Peter explains why changes of belief, like those of which Mrs Blair is suspected, are seldom genuine. You see, he does have a sense of humour after all.

MEANWHILE, I am shocked to note that some readers have rung the Express "Let's Get Cherie" freephone number (published on yesterday's letters page) to leave Peter messages he described as "depressingly coarse". There is never any excuse for rudeness, while one side-effect of this puerility was the closure of that freephone line. Our own 0800 number is in jeopardy, it is being bombarded when Peter left it on his answer-machine message. So let that be an end to it, then, and no accountancy to contact Peter via the main Express switchboard. Unless, of course, you have something sensible to say.

THE Christian principle of forgiveness has infiltrated big business. Annie Bebbington of Tottenham has received a letter of apology from the Royal Mail. The missive, from the customer services department, is signed by a certain Ron Biggs.

FIGHTING a one-woman rear-guard action against her family's image as grasping materialists is my friend Princess Michael of Kent. Marie Christine (as, alone of all royal watchers, me and my so-called rival Nigel Dempster are permitted to call her) is on a tour of the States, plugging her 1993 book on royal mistresses. Although she was badly reticent about Camilla in Washington on Sunday, the Princess did find her tongue when asked where the book (yet to be published in America) is available. "Ring Harrods," she said, "and give them your credit card number."

NEW beer is being advertised in the USA. Made by the Pittsburgh Brewing Company (brewers since 1891), and featuring "slim top LA models" on the labels, the low-calorie ale goes by the name of Wanker Light. According to a magazine advert, those desiring more information can write to Wanker Beer Inc at PO Box 8894, Newport Beach, CA 92658. There is no detail on initial sales figures as yet, but rumour suggests that the beer is making money hand over fist.

WE began with a paragon of political consistency, and thus we must end, I am appalled by a vile assault on my sane and rational friend Paul Johnson in the Spectator. The author is Matthew Parris — or "the Times's Sodom correspondent", as Paul so wittily calls him — is monstrous. "He deserves the adjective 'famous', almost. Paul Johnson is listened to, or, at any rate, heard," he says, preparing to unleash the middle stump yorke. "On finding, in any journal, an article by Mr Johnson," writes Mr Parris, "one never fails to start it." Thank God Mr Parris has none of Paul's killer instinct with the put-down "who can forget Paul's Wildean genius in describing Michael Grade as 'Britain's pornographer-in-chief'?" or he might be a pretty dangerous enemy.



Controlling the slithering beast

Commentary

Hugo Young

IF THERE is ever a referendum on a single European currency, it is obvious, though sometimes forgotten, what must precede it. The preconditions are arduous in the extreme. This truth will hold for any government, but let's assume the Tories are miraculously returned, since they're the ones wanting this stick to beat them into the pretence of unity. A referendum will occur only in the following circumstances.

There must be, first of all, a European single currency either operating or about to operate. The Government will have decided it wants sterling to belong. The Cabinet will have made a collective decision that the economic costs of staying out exceed the political costs of going in. It will have done this with the backing of the Parliament it controls, which will have given its authority for a referendum to test popular support for the decision: a position that will

real, which means 1999 or later. John Major has already decided all this. He made up his own mind to back a currency referendum some time ago. I'm reliably told. The Goldsmith initiative, making demands with massive monetary menaces, has sharpened the mind of the party machine, rendering it anxious about seats that could fall to even a 3-per-cent Goldsmith's presence in the ballot. But this is not the illuminating point. Greater light is thrown by asking why, if Major is in favour, he's been so slow to commit himself in public. The answer tells you all you need to know about the great palliative almost everyone now supposes a referendum to be.

Consider the opponents. They make a pincer-movement from the extremes. Michael Portillo opposed it for a long time, though he has now apparently yielded to the party managers' preference. He could see that, in the above circumstances, his side was likely to lose. Efficiently mobilised, the popular vote would not only approve the single currency but sweep the ground under the entire sceptic position on Europe, which depends so heavily on the claim to be speaking for a silenced people. The press might be more anti-European than it was in 1975, but otherwise the forces would be

roughly the same, and Portillo saw the trap. He could see something else. For there will be a further condition to any referendum campaign, which is that the Cabinet will not be permitted to split. The lesson of 1975, when the formal division of the Wilson Cabinet unleashed forces that led before long to the formation of the SDP, is that dissenters from the collective line should be permitted no more than the luxury of silence.

Major's strategy here, as everywhere, is at almost any cost to minimise splits in his Government. Any Cabinet sceptic would face the unpleasant choice of resigning, or standing aside while others make the case and steal the thunder. It is a measure of the short-term thinking which now dominates all Tory politics that Mr Portillo should be prepared to forget about these point considerations. Perhaps he thinks the referendum is no more than a posturing-point, sufficient unto the election. From the opposite side comes Kenneth Clarke, who still seems to be supported, contrary to recent wisdom, by Michael Heseltine. His objections are more conventional, but still based on an anxiety about power, manifesting rather thinly behind a concern for parliamentary principle. Losing is what they, also, fear. Even if well planned, a referendum is a slithering, elusive beast, taking control out of the capable

Major's strategy is at almost any cost to minimise splits in his Government

hands of ministers who can judge the national interest in the light of their recent mandate. Promising one now defies the elementary law of politics, which counsels against pledges disconnected from the time when they must be made good. To the anti-referendum party, the very line-up of the establishment raises a panicky fear, in these mistrustful days, that the people will see it as a signal for bloody-minded perversity — and thereby, casually, destroy for ever Britain's influence in Europe.

On parade with the Gay Spartans



Catherine Bennett

LIKE the right to work down the mines, or the right to die on a battlefield, the right to be a soldier in one's own country is one of those rights that are content to surrender. Even in peacetime, a career in the armed forces seems to offer the worst aspects of childhood: obeying orders, camping, bullying, uniforms, compulsory sport in the mud — with the additional humiliations of saluting, marching, sexual frustration, sleep deprivation, carrying heavy loads and long intervals of intense boredom. For those who volunteer for such misery, one feels only gratitude and sympathy. But why join them? Of all the ambitions of feminism, the insistence that women, including the mothers of young children, should enjoy the right to kill and be killed is surely the most perverse. Even now, with women allowed to fire in self-defence, some still resent being denied the privilege of actually trying to kill the enemy directly, like the ferocious Amazon, or the stropky Boadicea. In fact the female contribution to genocide has been historically negligible, something one might consider a source of pride, not regret.

The struggle for gay representation in the armed forces is equally puzzling. Is the opportunity to serve alongside boorish, boozy breeders really so compelling? Is it compatible with claims of superior sensitivity? A year ago, Peter Tatchell wrote an article in this newspaper in which he called on the Government to promote homosexuality. The reason? "Life would be much more peaceful and pleasant for everyone." Gays abhor violence, you see: "No one ever feels endangered by the sight of several gay men." This, presumably, would have made their presence rather a problem in the Falklands. Tatchell went further: "Queers prefer to love men rather than fight them," he wrote. "It is our refusal to 'act like a man' that makes us queers less prone to joblessness."

Now Tatchell is in the front line, battling for gays in the military. When the MoD survey of attitudes towards homosexuality confirmed Nicholas Soames in his mission to fight gays "every inch of the way", Tatchell was in his indignation: "Those heterosexual soldiers who cannot cope with showering next to gay colleagues are probably not up to the job of coping with the real pressure or dan-

ger of a war zone." Tatchell's latest campaign can only be a pacifist ruse, intended to make the British military much more peaceful and pleasant for everyone.

But Tatchell is clearly unaware of the great martial tradition behind him. It was said by the Cynic philosopher that Alexander the Great was only defeated once: by the thighs of his lover, Hephaestion. Alexander modelled himself on Achilles, the lover of Patroclus. More recently, JR Ackerley recalled the versatility of the Guards: "A pound was the recognised triffl for the Foot Guards then, the Horse Guards cost rather more." Alas, the MoD has shown that none of these warriors would be reversed in today's armed forces. Indeed, according to one aircrafman, if Alexander the Great had hypothermia, "I would not share my body heat with him. I'd rather he died." Achilles would have "an accident waiting for him when no one was looking". The one plausible argument put forward by both sexes, was the need to forge physical self-consciousness in close, cramped quarters. One Wren said: "I would not feel at all comfortable undressing in front of a girl who found the female body sexually attractive." It may be irrational, but if this desire for sexual privacy were not commonplace, there would be no complaints about mixed wards in hospitals; no segregated changing rooms in gyms; no need for separate quarters for servicemen and women.

HOMOPHOBIA in the forces deserves to be challenged, but if servicemen despise gays as much as they despise women, compulsory integration is an appalling prospect, even with separate bathrooms. After the disastrous co-ed voyages of HMS Brilliant, tormented Wrens complained of constant harassment from what one described as "a largely unattractive and misogynistic rabble".

The answer, in the short term, must be a regiment of gays, modelled on the crack homosexual troops of ancient Sparta. It has long been recognised that regiments do better if they have a strong esprit de corps, as do the Highlanders, the Green Jackets and Gurkhas. Similarly, the cohesion of our new Spartans would be an example to all. In time, their loyalty and heroism would not doubt impress the army's monstrous regiments of homophobes with a sense of what they have lost, and quell any offensive suspicion that gay applicants are only interested in looking at straight men in uniforms. Perhaps Peter Tatchell could help muster the requisite 500 men? He may not be Alexander the Great, but as OutRage! has shown, he makes a fine recruiting officer.



One China too many

John Gittings argues that behind the missile-rattling in the East China Sea the fundamental territorial ambitions of both sides have never gone away

THIS TIME the cannons which China has announced it will fire in the Taiwan Straits are loaded, and the question puzzling everyone is: why? Mao Zedong once famously told Richard Nixon not to worry about Beijing's fiery propaganda: it was nothing but the sound of "empty cannons". As for Taiwan rejecting the mainland, the Chairman added with dialectical assurance: "Let it come after 100 years." Now the military manoeuvres will use live ammunition the timetable has speeded up alarmingly.

Hong Kong, whose own jitters are compounded by the Taiwan Straits crisis, is partly responsible. President Jiang Zemin has made it clear that with Hong Kong (and Macao two years later) about to return to the mainland, Taiwan is next on a now-urgent agenda. China is alarmed by the firming up of Taiwan's de-facto independence as next week's presidential elections complete the formal transition to democracy. But Beijing's impatience seems to be driven by some deeper source. Yesterday a Hong Kong newspaper claimed that the veteran leader Deng Xiaoping had personally authorised a hardening of policy towards Taiwan in order to "guarantee" its reunification. Mr Deng, 91 last August, said

Chongqing argument, "the army steps in and demands action." The "confusion", they argue, arises from the political paralysis caused by what may well be Mr Deng's medical paralysis. Chinese officials say, with deadening repetition, that he is as well as can be expected for someone of his age — but how well?

There were strong indications last summer that top generals in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had put on pressure to ratchet up Beijing's reaction to the provocative (though unofficial) visit of Taiwan's President Lee to the US. Then, as now, Beijing said it with missiles in the East China Sea. The PLA would probably welcome the chance to show some military muscle over Taiwan: the island has been a source of intense frustration for nearly 50 years. Plans to complete its "liberation" by launching an invasion force in 1980 were thwarted by the outbreak of the Korean War. The US, which had seemed to back away from its unsuccessful Chinese Nationalist clients, then reversed course, interposing the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Straits.

In 1955 and again in 1958 China stepped up pressure by bombarding the offshore islands occupied by the Nationalists but close to the mainland. Although these two crises were labelled in the West as a threat to peace, they were never a prelude to invasion. Each was used by Beijing to send a message, first to the US and then to the Soviet Union, that China should not be ignored in their superpower summitry. They were early examples of "empty cannons". After the Nixon visit in 1972

opened the way to "normalising" US-China relations, the threat of war over Taiwan receded to apparent vanishing point. While Taiwanese flocked to invest in the motherland, many mainland officials professed open admiration for the island's superior economic performance. By the end of the 1980s, Taiwan had become a major issue in US-China relations. As cultural and economic ties expanded across the Straits, Washington could continue to supply military technology to the island, and to mask its relations through links such as the non-official "American Institute" in Taiwan.

Asia-wide opinion was lulled more generally by the new comforting myths of the post-cold-war. At international conferences in Tokyo, Seoul and Singapore, delegates from China, Japan, the US — and even Taiwan, masquerading as "Taipei (China)", could all agree: the age of geo-political contention was dead.

Instead, all would share the common goals of the new economic age. Issues of sovereignty could be shelved in mutual efforts to achieve the new East Asian Economic Miracle. This always naive view reached its peak with speculation about the post-Deng emergence of a Greater Southern China embracing harmoniously in economic symbiosis Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the booming south Chinese coast. But the conditions for a new conflict have been building up on both sides of the Straits as political life moves in opposite directions. In China it has become aged and more authoritarian, less capable of the flexible think-

ing which had begun before the Beijing massacre. In Taiwan it has become younger and more democratic, compelling President Lee and the Nationalists to shade their commitment — shared previously with Beijing — to "one China".

However much Beijing has overreacted, it was Mr Lee who disturbed the status quo by supporting the idea of dual Taiwan/Beijing representation in the UN, and paying a high-profile "private" visit last year to his PhD alma mater of Cornell University. In doing so he weakened the personal authority of President Jiang in Beijing, who had put forward an "eight-point" policy on Taiwan which was widely seen as more conciliatory.

Four years ago Mr Lee denounced opposition leaders who called for Taiwanese independence as "pariahs who will cut themselves off from our history and culture". Now he presents his party as following a "middle path" between independence and reunification with Beijing. Even more alarming for Beijing, he is also obliged to admit that a post-election "raprochement" might be possible with the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party. "There is only one China," Richard Nixon is reputed to have mused trickily on his return from Beijing, where he had signed a communique acknowledging the fact. "But we did not say which one!" The problem has subtly changed: now it is that there is only one Taiwan — whatever it may be called. Under whatever name, and in spite of economic miracles, the old issues left over from history refuse to go away.

YOU SAW LAST NIGHT'S WORLD IN ACTION



Will the real JONATHAN SMITH please stand up?

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As resonant as The Go-Between, a love story of beauty, deprivation and tragedy.
SUMMER in FEBRUARY
OUT NOW IN PAPERBACK
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"Enticing and surprisingly dark" SUNDAY TELEGRAPH



rights

10 OBITUARIES

Léo Malet

Poetry of the gutter

HE WAS adulated by both intellectuals and the common reader as 'the Da...'

it had been inspired by the film Carrouge, directed by Kurt Bernardt now unjustly forgotten.

Another important departure in his work was his Trilogie Noire, which contained the now cult-status story La Vie est dégoûtée.

Orphaned in Montpellier at the age of four, Malet was brought up by his grandfather, for whom he felt a profound attachment.

MALET began to try his hand at writing 'done for now. You can prepare your obits'...

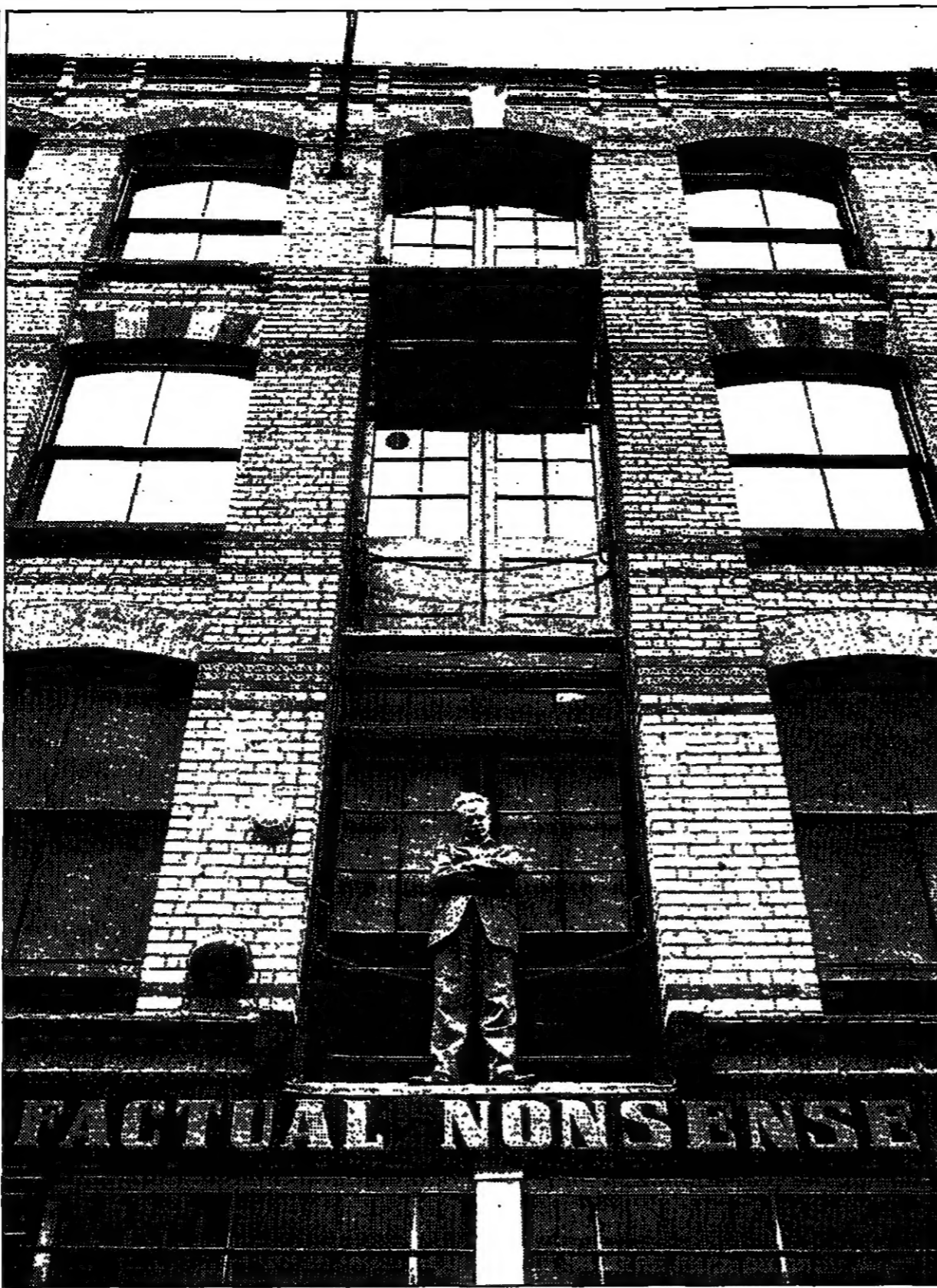
Today, a wonderful bookshop, the Bibliothèque de littérature policière (Billpo) in the rue Cardinal-Lemoine, is the last true resting-place of Nestor Burma and Léo Malet.

Malet this experience in the writing of his first Nestor Burma mystery, 120 rue de la Gare, it was a far cry from the

James Kirkup Léo Malet, writer, born March 7, 1905; died March 3, 1996



Morbid humour... Malet would greet visitors with 'I'm done for now. You can prepare your obits'



Aiming high... Compston wanted to close the gap between art, entertainment, and retailing

Joshua Compston

Art as revolution

JOSHUA Compston, who has died suddenly, was a beguiling and improbable revolutionary in the British art world, a perpetual student who always gave the impression of being in a tremendous hurry.

Let us be transformed the environment of Hoxton Square by organising regular art and music events that evoked the bizarre happenings of an earlier era.

His chief pride was in his invention of a multi-national company that he called Factual Nonsense - slogan FN: No Fun Without U.

example. 'If I can make things happen, you can too.' He always needed to be on the crest of a wave, but behind all the frenetic activity was a deep sense of exhaustion and disappointment.

A famously violent child, from a comfortable middle-class home - his father was a judge - he travelled a well-worn route through art colleges, where he would impressively and endlessly invent ways of using art to subvert the world around him.

He joked artworks from his wide circle of friends and acquaintances, and cleverly staged shows across the generational divide.

Eric Griffiths examines the aesthetics of the senses in Helge's Winter Collection, published in the TLS.

Dear Room 635, I am not your regular maid. She will be back tomorrow Thursday, from her day off. I took the three hotel soaps out of the shower soap dish as you requested.

Jackdaw



2 sheets filo pastry per person 3 oz clarified butter 2 in cube of Camembert per person

Blur, pulp, mash

I ALWAYS listen to music when I'm cooking. If it's a long, complicated recipe such as beef Wellington, I listen to Steve Winwood or late Genesis at medium volume.

Delia undone HEGEL would, on the whole, have approved of Delia Smith, and settled back after a day's wrestling with the absolute to watch eagerly what she might think to do next with a cranberry.

Soap opera

Dear Maid - I hope you are my regular maid. Apparently Kathy did not tell you about my note to her concerning the little bars of soap.

Clone zone

SAFETY-MAN: Your Personal Bodyguard. Designed as a visual deterrent, Safe-T-Man is a life-size.

Jackdaw wants your Jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Sylvia Williams

Seeing Africa in America

SYLVIA WILLIAMS, who has died aged 60, was a scholar and specialist in African art history who, with considerable bravura and force of personality, transformed a small, formerly private, museum into Washington DC's world-renowned National Museum of African Art.

The creation of a new gallery space for the Kerma exhibition led to the reorganisation, with a new historical focus, of the museum's works of art from the Kingdom of Benin as the Ancient West African City of Benin, AD 1300-1897.



Williams... moving spirit

by Anir T M Nour - and authored the accompanying catalogue. Williams's achievement, as Susan Vogel, director of the Yale University art gallery and African art scholar noted, was to have 'single-handedly changed the landscape of African art in the United States.'

Philip Ravenhill Sylvia Williams, museum director and curator, born February 10, 1936; died February 27, 1996

Death Notices

GARNER, Margaret Harriet, on Saturday March 10, 1996, peacefully in Clinton Hospital, at the age of 82. She was the dearly loved wife of the late Donald Nicholson Garner.

Birthdays

Sir Anton Acland, Provost of Eaton, 66; Dr Giovanni Agnelli, chairman of Fiat, 75; Edward Albee, playwright, 69; Ram Alfonsín, former president of Argentina, 68; Virginia Bottomley, MP, Secretary of State for National Heritage, 48; Norbert Bramm, violinist, 73; Willie Duggan, rugby footballer, 46; Anita Ekberg, actress, 60; and sculptor, 42; David Mellor, MP, former Conservative minister, 47; Lisa Minnelli, actress and singer, 50; Patrick Proctor, painter, 60; Rod Richards, MP, minister for health and social security, Welsh Office, 46; Ralph Shapley, composer and conductor, 75; James Taylor, singer, 46; Julian Trewheth, keeper, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 42; Elizabeth Vaughan, soprano, 80; Paul Way, golfer, 33; Google Withers, actress, 75; David Wilmut, chief constable, Greater Manchester, 53; Andrew Young, black American civil rights veteran, 64.

Recognitions

JONASON David William MBE FITSA died 2nd of February 1996. Gwyneth and Margaret thank all family and friends who sent messages of love and sympathy and all who attended the service and suffering on 10th March.

Births

DAUBNEY ARTHUR AND ANDELLA are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter Alexandra on 29th March 1996, at the Children's Hospital, Glasgow. A sister for Douglas.

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Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

German bank chief offers rates hope



All ye faithful... dealers during frantic trading on London's Liffe exchange yesterday

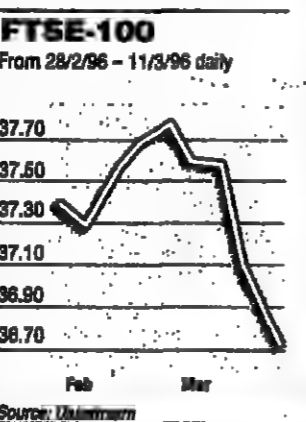
PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SHAW

Markets stay on red alert

Mark Truss in New York and Paul Murphy

THE CITY remained in a state of high tension last night, despite having fears of another rout on Wall Street dispelled and regardless of a comforting statement from Hans Tietmeyer, Bundesbank president, indicating that there was still room for interest rate cuts across Europe. London's financial markets suffered a day of extreme volatility. Traders in the bond and equity markets struggled to respond to the panic selling which hit New York late on Friday, wiping 171 points off the Dow Jones share index. Britain's FTSE 100 index slumped almost 80 points at one stage in the morning, with dealers given an additional fright by the collapse in sentiment on the Hong Kong

market. Investors there were reacting to the deterioration of relations between China and Taiwan as well as events in the US. However, a rebound in share prices in New York once trading resumed yesterday quickly fed through to

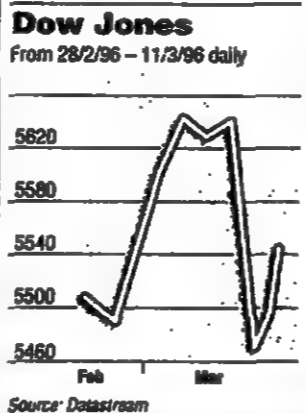


London. The loss on the Top 100 was cut to 35.8 points, leaving this key indicator at 3674.5. On Wall Street, the Dow Jones recovered 86 points to 5556 by mid-afternoon. Earlier, the Hang Seng index crashed 7.3 per cent - down 820 points to 10,387. In London, the price of gilt-edged stock also steadied. Analysts noted that there was no rush to sell by private investors - a key factor which contributed significantly to the 1987 stock market crash. But Wall Street strategists still suspect that last week's US jobs figures - showing an unexpected jump in job creation - will herald an important shift in investor sentiment. David Shulman, a market analyst with Salomon Brothers, said the market could fall "another couple of hundred points - but not much more... We are seeing a repricing of the market

to take into account the new interest rate environment." Hopes of a further easing by the Federal Reserve when its policy committee meets on March 28 have been abandoned. "The bond market was dehedging itself on a weak economic and further Fed easing," said Peter Canelo of NatWest Securities. He pointed to other signs of strength preceding February's unemployment data, including strong factory orders, retail sales and consumer confidence. "There was further evidence of economic strength in the US yesterday, with house sales up 4.2 per cent in January. Analysts had been looking for a 4.5 per cent drop. Other figures keenly awaited this week include consumer prices, industrial production and capacity utilisation. In Europe, Mr Tietmeyer emerged from a meeting of central bankers from the G10 group commenting that EMU alive and kicking, the world's markets was simply an "adjustment." "We don't see any crisis and don't see any reason for further declines," he said. "Monetary policy has done its job. However, in some

countries, there may be further room for small interest rate reductions, dependent on further examination of economic conditions." "It is very important to be cautious," he added. "One should not create any inflationary expectations."

Similarly, budgetary battles are not the irritant they were in 1987. The US, forced by the conflict between Congress and White House, has put itself into a balanced budget course - although it is worth remembering that President Clinton had already halved the budget deficit he inherited from George Bush. In Europe, the need to keep EMU alive has governments scrambling to deal with outstanding budgetary issues. This is not to say that New York investors were wrong on Friday. The capacity of the US economy is stretched, and the risk is that growth will translate itself into an unsustainable consumer boom. Hence the surge in bond yields. That may justify further correction and consolidation on Wall Street, but it is not bomb shelter time.



Orders famine forces factories to cut prices

Larry Elliott Economics Editor

A DEARTH of demand is forcing Britain's manufacturers to cut production and rein back on price increases, according to government figures released yesterday. Data from the Central Statistical Office showed that factory output in the latest quarter fell more sharply than at any time since the recession, while the annual growth rate in underlying factory gate prices fell for the fifth successive month. City analysts said the downbeat message from industry vindicated last Friday's quarter-point cut in base rates, adding that any improvement would depend on the gloom lifting in Britain's main European markets and on stronger consumer demand at home. However, the latest snapshot of high street activity from the British Retail Consortium shows spending has

come off the boil following buoyant trading conditions over the Christmas period. Annual sales growth in retailing stood at 3.6 per cent in February, down from 4.1 per cent in January and 4.3 per cent in December, the BRC says today. Andrew Stantance, the BRC's chief economic adviser, said: "The retail sales recovery lost a little momentum in February, though the underlying growth rate remains steady. The interest rate reduction we saw last week should help to counter any consumer hesitancy and appears fully justified in the light of these figures." According to the CSO's data, UK manufacturing production was 0.6 per cent lower in the three months to January than in the previous quarter. A 0.3 per cent increase in output in January failed to compensate for the 0.8 per cent drop in December. The industry's output is no higher than the level achieved before the recession

in spring 1980, and has increased by only 5 per cent in the 22 years since the mini-boom in the waks of the three-day week. Officials believe the current trend is flat, giving credence to the City's view that firms are meeting demand from stocks rather than new production. Prices charged at factory gates rose by just 0.2 per cent last month, a smaller increase than in February 1995. The annual rate fell from 3.8 per cent to 3.7 per cent, while the underlying rate - excluding food, drink, tobacco and petroleum products - slipped from 3.6 to 3.5 per cent. One bonus for manufacturers is that the reduction in global growth is feeding into lower commodity prices, reducing industry's bills for fuel and raw materials. Input prices dropped by 0.9 per cent in February, cutting the annual rate of growth from 3.9 per cent to 3.0 per cent.

Lloyd's Names 'will fight on'

Pauline Springett

REBEL Names at Lloyd's of London threatened yesterday to fight to the bitter end in their battle over the multi-billion-pound losses as final bids were dropped on their doorsteps. They warned that they would reject the market's £2.8 billion settlement deal unless the indicative offers they received in the morning's post were improved significantly. Lloyd's, which has lost around £11 billion, mailed offers to 34,000 Names over the weekend. Few Names will receive any money. The majority will have to pay, with demands rising to £100,000 for around 10,000 of those hardest hit by losses. The finalised offers will be posted in May, with both sides braced for some tough negotiating in the next couple of months. Christopher Stockwell, chairman of the Lloyd's Names Associations' Working Party, said that the overwhelming response of Names who had contacted him was one of horror. Many would lose their entire funds - the amount they have to deposit at

Lloyd's to back their underwriting - as well as having to pay up to £100,000. "Lloyd's knows it has to improve this," he said. Several Names immediately pledged to continue fighting for damages for their losses through the courts. If they accept the offer, they will have to abandon litigation. One, who asked not to be identified, said he had already paid £660,000 and was being asked for a further £100,000, as well as his £200,000 of funds at Lloyd's. He said he would get a better deal through the courts. "I'm quite sure this will be given a large raspberry by the Names." Another Name, who also requested anonymity, said the offer would have to be improved by 60 per cent if it was to be more attractive than litigation. "This is a waste of paper, a complete insult," she said. A Lloyd's spokesman tried to quell fears of widespread revolt, saying that of the 500-plus Names who had telephoned the market's helpline "90 per cent were saying they didn't understand the paperwork, although we obviously had one or two people saying they were absolutely furious."

Road to ruin for Richard just a case of bad timing

Richard Platts

RICHARD Platts was quite calm in the circumstances. His indicative statement from Lloyd's - four pages long accompanied by a 48-page explanatory guide - informed him that he would have to pay another £100,000 to draw a final line under his dealings with the scandal-ridden insurance market, writes Pauline Springett. "I fully expected it. I can't pay any of it. It's an interesting bit of paper," said Mr Platts, a former economics lecturer now in his sixties. Mr Platts joined Lloyd's in 1986 - when he had assets of £250,000 - just after the market had notched up a series of record profits. His timing proved catastrophic. In 1987 he made a profit of around £20,000, a sum swiftly swallowed up by his 1988 loss of £100,000. After that the losses mushroomed. They now total nearly £2 million and his original £250,000 has long gone. He will now attempt to negotiate a reduced final bill. The first stage will be to apply for extra debt relief. To qualify, he will have to submit himself to a means test. That is not a prospect many Names relish, but Mr Platts, who now works for the Good Walker action group, has lost so much money he says he no longer cares.

Notebook

Not quite time for bomb shelter yet



Edited by Alex Brummer

WITH the exception of Hong Kong, where the matter of war over Taiwan to contend with, the global equity markets did not go through a Black Monday after Wall Street's grey Friday. March 1996 is not October 1987, whatever much of the weekend analysis may have said. As no less a figure than the Bundesbank president, Hans Tietmeyer, observed yesterday, emerging from the central bankers club in Basle, "underlying conditions are healthy worldwide." Certainly there has been a speculative bubble in New York this year, particularly in technology shares - and, latterly, as consumer spending has come alive, in retail shares. But the divisive economic issues of 1987, which were part of the psychology of the crash, no longer persist. In 1987, the US and Germany were at each other's throats over interest rate levels. Now, monetary policy on both sides of the Atlantic is reasonably relaxed, in keeping with a fairly dormant inflation outlook. Indeed, as Dr Tietmeyer noted, there may be room for further monetary easing to translate itself into an unambiguously positive signal.

\$17.2 billion (\$11.2 billion), making Mr Buffett the richest person in the United States. As the highest-priced share on the New York exchange, Berkshire Hathaway does not tend to move very much. But that is about to change. When it made its results statement, the company disclosed that it will soon be offering a new class of shares worth one-third of the current value. Until now Mr Buffett has steadfastly refused to offer scrip issues or split the shares because of concern about attracting speculators: he only welcomes long-term holders. But proposals by an enterprising Boston-based fund manager to launch a Berkshire Hathaway mutual fund, offering access to all investors, has spurred Mr Buffett to come up with his own scheme. While others might prefer cash to paper at present, Mr Buffett, who never willingly sells a share, has declined the cash offer for his 20 million shares in ABC/Capital Cities (one of his best performing buys) and decided to take Disney shares instead. Thus the unobtrusive investor is now the biggest shareholder by far in two American icons: Coca Cola and Disney. The reality is brand commitment.

Major promises

JOHN Major was right to emphasise the importance to the economy of strong and growing small- and medium-sized businesses and to acknowledge the sector's role in creating jobs. "They are crucial to the future of the UK," he told the UK Business Matters conference. The Prime Minister was also right to note that removing unnecessary shackles from business should not mean a complete laissez faire approach - that where government could help, it should. The promised bonfire of red tape should, indeed, be used to burn away excess paperwork and make it easier for smaller firms to comply with a more straightforward set of regulations. But making the UK the enterprise centre of Europe also requires the full and enthusiastic participation of the workforce in small and other businesses. It is the Government's role to mediate competing demands from its different groups in society - from employers who demand fewer regulations and from workers who demand the right to be treated fairly and with respect. Much of what small firms are telling Government is reasonable and sensible, particularly on the vexed issue of late payment. But it is also reasonable for their staff to enjoy basic employment rights. That Conservative politicians are, at the moment, desperate to secure the business votes which drifted away during the recession should not mean that the smaller firms lobby has its demands accepted automatically. This is no more acceptable than a policy conveyor belt from trade unions to Labour.

Experts urge 'back to work' plan to beat benefits trap

Sarah Ryle

A \$7.5 BILLION programme to get the jobless back to work was unveiled today by employment experts who said the number of people caught in the benefits trap is reaching crisis levels. The package would include a £3.50 hourly minimum wage as well as lower taxes for poorly paid jobs and a new benefits system so that wage gains were not cancelled out by reduction in state handouts. As the number of homes dependent on benefits has risen to one in five, more unemployed people have found they lose more than they gain by working, research by the Employment Policy Institute showed. The type of work on offer - known as entry jobs - has become less secure and less well-paid. But the scheme would have to be phased in over three years and would boost the basic rate of tax to at least 27p. "The benefits trap is very real," said Nick Isles, director of the EPI. "It is an expensive scheme and no politician is going to commit to this sort of

spending in the current climate. But without it we will just see an increasing crisis." He said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kenneth Clarke, could leave the basic tax rate where it is and target any cuts at the bottom end of the jobs market. One in five homes were without a wage earner in 1994 (the most recent year for which full data is available) compared with 8 per cent in 1979. Three out of every five entry jobs are part-time or temporary.

Allied Domecq pins hopes on family pubs

Ian King

DRINKS group Allied Domecq yesterday set out to boost its share of the lucrative family pubs market, with a £150 million refurbishment programme, and a pledge to create at least 7,500 full and part-time jobs. Allied, at the centre of demerger rumours since last month's profits warning, unveiled an expansion of its family-based Big Steak Pub and Wacky Warehouse children's play areas. The investment, one of the biggest in a single year by a drinks company, comes at a time when pub operators are falling over themselves to attract families. Martin Grant, managing di-

rector of Allied Domecq Leisure, said family pubs had been growing in popularity for several years, but received an extra boost with all-day Sunday opening last year. In addition, Mr Grant said local authorities were now starting to accept more readily the conversion of non-pub buildings, such as chapels and libraries. He added: "This more liberal approach is allowing pub chains to operate on a more competitive footing with places such as cafes, and the pub market has only just started to reap the benefits." Under Allied's plan, at least 100 more Big Steak pubs will be added to the 333-strong chain by Christmas, most of which will also carry Wacky Warehouse areas. Mr Grant said Wacky Warehouse - where parents will be barred - would be staffed by qualified nurses, and video recordings would be made of every person entering.

TOURIST RATES - BANK SELLS

Australia 1,925.00	France 7.49	Italy 2,235	Singapore 2.10
Austria 15.30	Germany 2,200	Malta 0.54	South Africa 5.82
Belgium 44.50	Greece 385.0	Netherlands 2,470.00	Spain 183.75
Canada 2.02	Hong Kong 11.57	New Zealand 2.21	Sweden 10.30
Cyprus 0.70	India 51.97	Norway 9.68	Switzerland 1.77
Denmark 6.48	Israel 0.86	Portugal 225.00	Turkey 96,853
Finland 6.94	Japan 4.73	Saudi Arabia 5.67	USA 1,487.5

Sourced by Market Data including hidden rates and bank spreads

Santer seeks £700m ministerial bypass

John Palmer in Brussels

JACQUES Santer, president of the European Commission, is going over the heads of European Union finance ministers with a plan to switch spending from agriculture to transport and energy. The finance ministers are threatening to block an EC plan to find extra cash for trans-European networks

summit later this month - to raise the issue again with EU heads of government. If they decide to confirm the position taken by the finance ministers then at least we will know where the responsibility for lack of progress will lie. Chancellor Kenneth Clarke joined ministers from France, Germany and the Netherlands yesterday in insisting that any underpend be returned to national governments.

from more than £700 million savings in the farm budget. Speaking after a meeting of EU finance ministers, Mr Santer said the decision to block the transfer flew in the face of appeals by heads of government for faster action on infrastructure investment. The commission says the transport projects will boost competitiveness and jobs. Mr Santer said: "I'm seized taking the earliest possible opportunity - at the Turin



12 FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

Groups welcome red tape promise • Lang says no cabinet split on employment rights but changes 'not ruled out'

We will pay bills on time, Major tells small firms

Celia Weston Enterprise Editor

THE Government renewed its bid to secure the small-business vote yesterday when the Prime Minister pledged to step up the attack on red tape and take action on late payment, notably by government departments.

In a speech to the Your Business Matters conference, Mr Major announced a series of measures to simplify business registration and tax inspections as well as to tackle late payment.

Further measures were promised for the third competitiveness white paper, due to be published in early June. The Government left open the question of whether firms employing fewer than 25 employees would be exempt from employment protection legislation, following last week's row between the Trade and Industry Secretary, Ian Lang, and Michael Heseltine, deputy prime minister.

Mr Lang said later that there were no serious differences in the Government on the issue but refused to rule out future changes in employment legislation. The Prime Minister promised that government departments — some recently exposed by the Labour Party as chronic late payers — would set an example on payment of commercial debt, an issue close to many small business people's hearts.

He said: "It is simply not acceptable that the Government should be a late-payment culprit. I intend to instruct all departments to pay promptly, and to ensure they

do, we will publish each year a league table of all government departments' payment performance — not their aspirations, but the record of what they actually achieve."

Local authorities would also come under scrutiny, and if they did not agree voluntarily to publish payment league tables, the Government would consider forcing them to do so by law, Mr Major said. "I believe we should take steps to generate embarrassment amongst those who wilfully and continually pay late."

A further consultation would be held on whether all private sector companies should be legally required to

publish details of their payment performance, as well as their policies.

Small-firm pressure groups welcomed specific measures announced by Mr Major and other ministers that, from next month, new businesses would be able to register through a single form for income tax, national insurance and Value Added Tax.

Enforcement of regulations would also be simplified, with business owners and managers given the right to challenge inspectors and appeal against any judgement.

The Prime Minister said: "Small businesses are not some minority interest, they are the backbone of our economy and the main source of future jobs."

Relief of burdens on smaller companies included the eventual abolition of capital gains and inheritance tax, reform of the business rate system and slashing central bureaucracy.

A survey by C4 Consulting shows that the average NHS trust pays only 58 per cent of bills within 30 days. By value, it pays 65.6 per cent of debts within 30 days, indicating that small service providers are the ones squeezed, writes David Brindle.

Trusts are supposedly obliged to meet the 30-day CBI prompt payment code, under the 1994 circular FDL(94)74.

The worst performing trust settled 6.3 per cent of bills within 30 days. On an index combining volume and value, the worst two settled 9.6 per cent (Greenwich Healthcare, London, and the Cardiothoracic Centre, Liverpool). These trusts settled 100 per cent — Avon Ambulance, Northgate and Prudhoe in Northumberland, and Parkside in London.

Small is beautiful... Ian Lang at the conference, with public service minister Roger Freeman

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID THOMSON

Parliamentary answers depict Whitehall farce on billing issue

WHITEHALL'S worst late payers to business have already been named by the Government in a series of Parliamentary answers to Barbara Roche, Labour's small business spokeswoman, it was disclosed last night, writes David Hencke.

Ministers have also said that in many cases they do not know how much money has been paid late, while

other ministries have admitted to not having the computer software to monitor the situation or the knowledge of their own record of late bill payments.

Mrs Roche said yesterday: "It is extraordinary that the Prime Minister is promising now to publish the information when individual ministries released the 1994 figures to me has been paid late, while

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Government's worst bill payers

Ministry	Percentage paid 30 days late or more	Sum involved
Treasury	25.0	£1.6m
Trade and Industry	18.0	£311m
MAFF (Agriculture)	14.59*	Not Known
ODA (Overseas Dev)	13.0	£65.356m
Social Security	10.5	£1.9m
National Heritage	9.4	£0.753m
Health	8.1	£11.34m
Home Office	8.0	£23.2 m
Foreign Office	7.5	Not known
N Ireland	5.3	Not known
Education/Employment	5.0	£7m
Wish Office	5.0	Not known
Scottish Office	4.0	Not known
Defence	0.001	Not known
Environment	Not known	Not known

Note: Figures for DTI, Home Office, Education/Employment and Health cover goods and services only. No information about other contract bills. The Department of the Environment is operating reliance on a computer accounting system to be introduced this year and has no central records of its bill-payment performance. *Covers 1995 only.

concern in the industry that an incoming government would tighten the tax regime.

Unveiling the industry's 25-year projection of oil and gas reserves, Dr Hughes added that the "most potent and damaging lever" available to government was change to the fiscal regime. He warned that the industry was less able to respond flexibly to tax changes. It had "less elbow room" than in the past and it was developing smaller offshore fields on a tighter cost base.

He rejected suggestions that much of the industry's tax and royalty payments to the state — £140 billion to date — had been offset by special allowances.

The UKOIA report suggests that UK oil production will continue to exceed consumption for at least 10 years, and that there are reserves to sustain "significant levels" of production for at least another 20 years. It goes further than studies in 1984 and 1988 which forecast self-sufficiency only until the end of the century.

Production is approaching a peak, expected in 1996/1997 at 2.9 million barrels a day, before declining slowly to 1 million barrels a day.

Gas production is capable of peaking at over 10,000 million cubic feet a day by 2000, provided there is sufficient demand from power stations or exports through the interconnector pipeline. Gas production will then fall to 4,000 million cubic feet in 2020.

Other competitors' stores, while Sainsbury will not be closing in its premises. While this is good news — a pleasant change for Sketchley — it is insubstantial. The chain has 27 cleaning units and seven Supasnaps branches in Sainsbury supermarkets. That can only expand at about 15 per year, given the supermarket opening programme.

More substantial was yesterday's announcement of 160 closures, reducing the main chain to 550 shops. That will cost 500 jobs and £6.5 million in cash, plus £1 million in asset write-offs. And it will eliminate losses of £2.5 million a year. The charge against this year's profits will result in another dip in the results after two years of growth.

Even after these closures, however, it will still be hard to grind out profits from dry cleaning — a business which is difficult to brand, and open to competition from numerous smaller operators who have lower costs and are prepared to accept lower profit levels than a public company.

In the 1980s Sketchley attempted to escape this dilemma by becoming a conglomerate, but that proved fruitless and was reversed. Then, a couple of years ago, it bought Supasnaps from Dixons. But photo-processing is just as competitive a business, as the latest volume-boosting price cuts have shown. Even combining the two in the same premises has its problems.

Perhaps the answer is a dry-cleaning supermarket, a 15,000 square feet of machines in an acre of parking space. Or perhaps not. Even if it was called Sainsbury it would be unlikely to pack them in.

Sketchley's record

Pre-tax profit/loss, £m.



Source: Datastream

not reflected this change in consumer spending patterns."

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Even after these closures, however, it will still be hard to grind out profits from dry cleaning — a business which is difficult to brand, and open to competition from numerous smaller operators who have lower costs and are prepared to accept lower profit levels than a public company.

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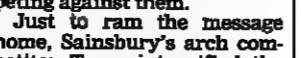
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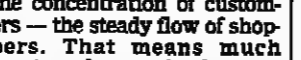
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Tax hike would damage oil production, warns industry

Chris Harris

THE oil industry delivered a stark warning yesterday that higher taxes would damage offshore investment and production of oil and gas reserves.

Predicting that the UK would be self-sufficient in oil for the next decade at least, Dr Harold Hughes, director-general of the UK Offshore Operators Association, said that fiscal changes had sometimes been made overnight without being thought through.

He was sending "signals to governments of whatever colour," calling on them to avoid "unfortunate steps which would damage the longevity of this industry." His remarks follow

concern in the industry that an incoming government would tighten the tax regime.

Unveiling the industry's 25-year projection of oil and gas reserves, Dr Hughes added that the "most potent and damaging lever" available to government was change to the fiscal regime. He warned that the industry was less able to respond flexibly to tax changes. It had "less elbow room" than in the past and it was developing smaller offshore fields on a tighter cost base.

He rejected suggestions that much of the industry's tax and royalty payments to the state — £140 billion to date — had been offset by special allowances.

The UKOIA report suggests that UK oil production will continue to exceed consumption for at least 10 years, and that there are reserves to sustain "significant levels" of production for at least another 20 years. It goes further than studies in 1984 and 1988 which forecast self-sufficiency only until the end of the century.

Production is approaching a peak, expected in 1996/1997 at 2.9 million barrels a day, before declining slowly to 1 million barrels a day.

Gas production is capable of peaking at over 10,000 million cubic feet a day by 2000, provided there is sufficient demand from power stations or exports through the interconnector pipeline. Gas production will then fall to 4,000 million cubic feet in 2020.

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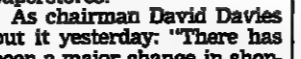
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CHELTEMHAM FESTIVAL

Alderbrook to take second step up the ladder of fame

Chris Hawkins sees little danger to the title holder in today's Champion Hurdle

ALDERBROOK is not yet talked about in the same breath as Perstan War, Night Nurse or Dula, but a second successive Champion Hurdle victory at Cheltenham today would surely put him up a rung or two in the post-war order of merit.

He is a fast, natural jumper with a fine turn of speed and, with rain forecast, conditions should be ideal for him this afternoon. In these circumstances, it is hard to see him being beaten.

One of the reasons Alderbrook is not yet regarded as one of the greats is that his races over hurdles have been few and far between and this will be only his fourth outing in two seasons.

He won both last year, culminating in a five-length romp in the Champion, and proved his walking with an apparently effortless win over Mack The Knife at Kempton last month on his reappearance.

It is not just over hurdles that he has made his mark, however, and on the Flat he has put up some pretty high class performances, most notably last summer at Baden Baden when falling by three-quarters of a length to give 2lb to the subsequent Arc de Triomphe runner-up Free-

dom Cry. That would suggest he is one of the best dual-purpose horses we have seen for some time, and his opponents at the winter game know all about it - none of them has yet managed to get him off the bit.

They live in hope, of course, and a mistake or two might bring him down to the level of an ordinary honest toiler.

It may be offensive, even heretical, to call a horse like Danoli a mere toiler for he is regarded, quite rightly, as a national hero in Ireland, revered almost as much as the mighty Arkle.

That he is in the line-up this afternoon is something of a miracle. After finishing third to Alderbrook here last season (beaten seven lengths) he broke a leg at Aintree and it appeared that his career, and maybe even his life, was over.

Land Afrar has twice promised to make the frame in the race only to feel over at the crucial stage and I nominate him as the best outsider, but Alderbrook (3-30) to beat Hotel Minella seems the most likely outcome.

The Festival opens with the 28-runner Citreux Supreme Novices Hurdle in which Kilmackey (2-50) is taken to confirm the big impression he created at Kempton last time when hardly coming off the bridle.

The going there was heavy and he is reckoned by his trainer to be twice the horse on decent ground.

This ultra-consistent chaser handles any going, is a fast timer and won over the course and distance earlier in the season.

Best bet of the day looks to be Ungruidd Missle (4-05), who is napped to win the Ritz Chase. This ultra-consistent chaser handles any going, is a fast timer and won over the course and distance earlier in the season.

On paper the toughest event of the day is the 12-runner Hamlet Cigars Gold Cup Handicap Hurdle, but Fuzzy Logic (5-15) should run well. He loves the Cheltenham track and has a 5lb pull for a five-lengths beating by Pleasure Seeker at Chesham last time.



Just champion... Alderbrook defends his crown at Cheltenham today

One for racegoers to avoid

THOSE going to Cheltenham by road via the M4 and Cirencester are strongly advised to avoid the extensive roadworks on the A435 at Colebourne.

It's too late for rail travellers to book the 2133 9.50am special from Paddington with champagne breakfast on the outward journey and Pullman dinner on the return trip. But there are still direct trains leaving at 9.03 (arr. 10.49) and 10.40 (arr. 12.30). Special trains return at 6.40pm, 7.35 and 8.50.

Big race field Channel 4

Table listing race details for Channel 4, including race numbers, names, and times.

Rest of the Cheltenham runners and riders

Table listing runner and rider details for various races, including names and jockeys.

Channel 4

Table listing race details for Channel 4, including race numbers, names, and times.

Results

Table listing race results, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Sedgefield

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Windsor

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Vertical advertisement on the left side of the page, featuring text like 'farming she are still in' and 'In search of digital peace'.

Advertisement for RACELINE, featuring text like 'FIRST FOR CHELTEMHAM' and 'LIVE RACE COMMENTARY'.

WORLD CUP CRICKET

Quarter-finals: South Africa v West Indies

Lara and Co bounce back in style

Mike Selvey in Karachi

LESS than a fortnight ago West Indies' cricket suffered the darkest day in its history, humbled by Kenya in Pune. They were a bickering, fractious, factioned side in torment, and they were on the brink of returning home in disgrace to face the vilification of the islands for whom success at cricket is a meaning beyond most people's understanding.

But with humiliation sometimes comes catharsis and so yesterday, with the manager-in-chief sacked, the captain having tendered his resignation, and grievances aired long into the nights since, they rose to beat South Africa: everyone knew where he stood and they all became brothers, a unit, a team once more.

As Courtney Walsh knocked back Paul Adams' middle stump with the third ball of the final over to complete the game, there were scenes of passion. Stumps were smashed. Fives were never higher and the hugs of joy were genuine, mirrored no doubt in the rum shops and bars of the Caribbean that stayed open long into the night to witness just such a moment.

Behind it all, dignified, always believing, was Richie Richardson who, long criticised for his lack of tactical awareness, had marshalled his men superbly.

At the awards ceremony afterwards the commentator Bob Willis, who has done all so well as Protea shirt during this tournament, gave Hansie Cronje his due — "credit to the competition... wonderful effort... blab, blab" — before asking Richardson for a few words of consolation.

"Well," grinned Richie Rich. "I can only say tough luck. But it was do or die and someone had to go." Precious little consolation, he knows, would have come his way if his international career had ended with defeat yesterday.

The triumph, by 19 runs, was doubly sweet. It sees West Indies into their first World Cup semi-final since 1983 and also prevented Cronje's side, unbeaten since England managed it in Bloemfontein in January, from equalling West Indies record of 11 successive limited-overs wins. Like Kasparov beating the chess computer Deep Blue, it was one in the eye for the technological era.

South Africa have prepared and planned like no other side. They have bowled brilliantly, fielded superlatively, and were well led. But all this

all Bob Woolmer's computer and psychobabble, the army of dieticians, doctors and coaches and a PR machine to die for, counted for nought in the face of one innings of genius from Brian Lara.

Lara, a troubled figure himself this past year, finally put it in the background to bat fearlessly, making 111 from 94 balls, with 16 boundaries, and setting such a pace that not even a middle-order collapse, as South Africa fought back handsomely, could prevent West Indies reaching 264 for eight.

On a pitch being used for the third time the South African spinners Pat Symcox and Adam Adams had spun the ball enough to give their side cause for concern batting last, even if they were unaware that no side had ever successfully chased such a total in a one-day international in Pakistan.

Yet, if there was a familiarity about the contribution of Lara, about the way that Curly Ambrose made the first throw into the South African order and Walsh provided the coup de grace, then the middle was astounding as Richardson used his spinners — three of them, no less — to such effect that they took the other eight wickets, backed by superb catching in the deep, where not a chance — and there were some tremblers — went begging.

Principal among these Caribbean twirlers, with four for 47, was Roger Harper, his own career resurrected after suffering the yips a few years back. Next there were three wickets, too, for the ice man, Jimmy Adams — good ones at that: Andrew Hudson for 54, Daryll Cullinan for an adventurous 68, with three sixes, and the clincher of Cronje himself for 40.



Sweeping to victory... South Africa's wicketkeeper Palframan can only watch as Lara strikes on his way to a brilliant 111

WEST INDIES
S Chandrapaul c Cullinan b Mathison 28
C O Browne c Cullinan b Mathison 28
B C Lara c Pollock b Symcox 111
R S Richardson c Mathison b Symcox 19
R A Harper 10 b Mathison
R C Holder 10
K J Athurston c Mathison b Symcox 18
J C Adams not out 17
I A Sanchez b Adams 17
C E L Ambrose not out 10
Extras (12, 10, 11, 2, 10, 11) 58
Total (for 8, 50 overs) 264
Fall of wickets: 42, 160, 210, 214, 227, 230, 250, 254

Did not bat: C A Watson
Bowling: Pollock 9-0-4-0, Mathison 10-0-4-1, Cronje 3-0-17-0, Mathison 10-1-37-2, Symcox 10-0-54-2, Adams 8-0-4-3

SOUTH AFRICA
A C Hudson c Walsh b Adams 56
G Krieger 111 not out
D J Cullinan c Mathison b Symcox 40
W J Cronje c Athurston b Adams 40
J N Rhodes c Adams b Harper 18
B J Matthews 10
S M Pollock c Adams b Harper 8
P S Symcox c Harper b Athurston 26
C R Matthews not out 21
F R Adams b Walsh 19
Extras (11, 10, 11, 2, 10, 11) 58
Total (for 8, 50 overs) 264
Fall of wickets: 21, 118, 140, 188, 196, 198, 220, 227, 230

Did not bat: D J Nash
Bowling: Pollock 9-0-4-0, Mathison 10-0-4-1, Cronje 3-0-17-0, Harper 6-0-30-1, Symcox 10-0-54-2, Athurston 8-0-30-1

Overseas: K J Francis and S S Pandolf
West Indies won by 19 runs.

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Even Keith Arthurton, failed Flash Harry with the bat, got in on the act with his own brand of left-arm. What a toss to lose. Cronje will reflect in the quiet hours.

It was Harper's eighth over that pushed the issue beyond doubt as South Africa, never quite up with the rate but hanging in gamely, were just beginning to believe there was still a sniff of a chance. Two overs earlier Cronje had hauled Jimmy Adams to deep midwicket and now, with timing that had eluded him at the crease, Richardson brought back Harper to complete his spell.

Immediately Jonty Rhodes pulled straight to Adams, also at deep midwicket. Brian McMillan, whose earlier bowling had done much to get South Africa back in the game, went back to the next ball and was leg-before, and then Steve Palframan chipped a difficult

one-handed return catch which the Harpoon, one of the great fielders still, snaffled like a plate of chicken, rice and peas. At 196 for six there was no coming back.

For Lara to have been on the losing side would have been a travesty for, after Shivnarine Chandrapaul (56) and Courtney Browne (26) had given the match the perfect start with a blistering stand of 42, he gave an exhilarating exhibition of offside strokeplay as the South African bowlers, particularly the unfortunate spinner Symcox, who was hit for five matchless boundaries in one over, allowed him wraith.

But by the time the South Africans realised the error of their ways, and adapted accordingly, Lara and Chandrapaul had added 138 for the second wicket and South Africa were on their way back to Johannesburg.

Australia v New Zealand
David Hopps in Madras

AUSTRALIA have rarely been in more urgent need of Mark Waugh's nonchalant batting talents than they were in the steamy atmosphere of the Chepauk Stadium yesterday, and he did not fail them as he produced a century of considerable grace to quell the doughtiest of New Zealand challenges.

This World Cup is becoming the platform for the fulfilment of a remarkable talent. Waugh has already made 465 runs at an average of 94, the leading aggregate in the tournament, his 110 from 112 balls yesterday enabling Australia to reach the semi-finals with six wickets and more than two overs in hand.

For a display of raw courage, no one could rival New Zealand's all-rounder Chris Harris, whose own hundred left his face pained with exhaustion and put Australia on the brink of elimination as they faced an intimidating total of 286 for nine.

Waugh was not remotely fazed. He batted with a cool detachment that contrasted starkly with the exertions of Harris and his captain Lee Germon in the heat of the day. These days, however, for all his sang-froid, Waugh's desire burns more intensely as if he is determined to lay for all time his reputation as an under-schiever.

Waugh's first fifty passed by virtually unnoticed as New Zealand, heartened by excellent new-ball spells by Dion Nash and the off-spinner Dipak Patel, held Australia in check. When Patel returned, Waugh struck him for two long-on sixes so smooth that the night air barely rustled. By the time he eventually fell, lofting Nash to long-on, his poise had infiltrated the Australian dressing-room. Steve Waugh and Stuart Law completed the formalities with ease.

"I got cramps in my calves when I'd got about 10 but fortunately I got a second wind," said Waugh, who became the first man to make three centuries in a World Cup. In this mood there is every prospect of him adding a fourth.

New Zealand will rue the fielding lapses which allowed Shane Warne, promoted to No. 4 with an urgent need to slow the bowlers, two lives in making a rapid 24, the first lapse by Nash as he hauled Thomson's off-spin to deep midwicket, the second a simple strike induced by the Australian spinner.

New Zealand also envisaged a score in excess of 300 after reaching the 30-over mark at 180 for three but Germon was caught for 88, Fleming diving

forward at long-off, Harris was spent long before he struck Warne's final delivery to deep midwicket and support elsewhere was sadly lacking for a side that could field a batsman of Patel's talent at No. 10. As New Zealand fell away, Bevan's left-arm chinamen aid Australia proud.

There is nothing elegant about Harris. In fact, his style is particularly gawky — and the all-rounder grinned throughout every hauled drive and pull as if he realised that he will never experience another day like it. He later gazed his arm, pulling off a brilliant stop in the covers and negotiated his spell of slow-medium with the aching feet of a man fated to wade everlastingly through a cabbage patch.

With his light-grey kit stained dark with sweat, and his thinning hair drenched with mineral water, Harris became increasingly afflicted by cramp in the later stages of his innings. Several times he seemed on the verge of calling for a runner but instead he battled gamely on, sinking to his knees with exhaustion in the closing overs.

Harris had joined his captain Germon as an expendable batsman promoted to maintain the momentum of the innings. At 44 for three in the ninth over, with Fleming encouraged by outswing and McGrath by bounce, New Zealand were in a parlous position. Another quick wicket would have forced them to retrench but Harris and Germon were undaunted as they played 168 in 27 overs.

Australia, under the coach, were reduced to an old stand-by — four overs of abuse-ridden medium-pace by Steve Waugh. 'Junior' Waugh was to make his mark more tranquilly.

NEW ZEALAND
C M Speerman c Healy b Reffel 40
N Ager c Healy b Fleming 11
T G Germon c Harrow b McGrath 88
S P Fleming c S R Waugh b McGrath 59
S Z Harris b Reffel b Warne 130
R G Tweed b Bevan 11
C L Cairns c Reffel b M E Waugh 41
C E Ferris c Warne b M E Waugh 11
S A Thomson run out 11
I A Nash not out 11
Extras (10, 10, 10, 10) 40
Total (for 8, 50 overs) 286
Fall of wickets: 15, 16, 44, 212, 227, 240, 252, 255

Did not bat: D J Nash
Bowling: Reffel 4-0-38-1, Fleming 10-0-3-1, Warne 10-0-22-1, Bevan 10-0-35-1, S R Waugh 4-0-25-0

AUSTRALIA
M E Waugh c Favore b Nash 110
R T Ponting c S R Thomson 21
S R Warne b Ager 59
S R Waugh not out 58
D Benaud not out 22
Extras (11, 10, 10, 10) 40
Total (for 4, 75 overs) 286
Fall of wickets: 18, 84, 127, 213
Did not bat: M E Bevan, P R Reffel, D W Fleming, G D McGrath
Bowling: Nash 5-1-4-1, Patel 6-0-48-1, Cairns 6-0-1-1, Harris 10-0-41-0, Thomson 8-0-57-1, Ager 3-0-21-1, Tweed 2-0-24-0
Australia won by six wickets

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In this sport, it's the humans who are treated with cruelty. Venue: White Hart Lane, Tottenham • Home games: April 14, May 6, May 19, May 27, June 16 • Courtesy shuttle bus with return service from Seven Sisters tube • Pre-game Power Party at 12:00pm • Kick-off at 3:00pm • Half-price admission for children 12 and under • Season tickets: 5 for the price of 4.

London Monarchs V Scottish Claymores

First game April 14th

London Monarchs V Scottish Claymores

London Monarchs V Scottish Claymores

London Monarchs V Scottish Claymores

London Monarchs V Scottish Claymores

London Monarchs V Scottish Claymores

ATHLETICS
Kipketer must run for Kenya

WILSON KIPKETER, the 800 metres world champion, must compete for his native Kenya, and not for Denmark, his adopted country, at the Atlanta Olympics, the African country insisted yesterday.

Kipketer wants to run for Denmark, for whom he won a gold medal at the world championships last year, even though he is not a Danish citizen. But Charles Mukora, chairman of Kenya's Olympic Committee, said Kipketer cannot do so because the International Olympic Committee Charter requires Olympic competitors to be citizens of the countries they represent.

Kipketer will not meet the seven-year residency requirement to become a Danish citizen until next year. The IOC believes he could qualify for Atlanta if the Danish parliament granted him early citizenship, but that appears unlikely.

ICE HOCKEY
Council may ban Wasps

DURHAM WASPS may be forced to quit the Crowtree Leisure Centre in Sunderland at the end of the season in the wake of the brawl on Saturday which has brought swift condemnation from the local authority.

The fighting resulted in the game against Humberdale Hawks being abandoned after 55 seconds when police arrived, the second time in three months they had been called to the venue following a violent incident.

Bryn Sidaway, the leader of Sunderland City Council, said: "I'm just pleased the ice hockey team does not carry the name of Sunderland. We do not want our city associated with that kind of behaviour. I know it's a very hard physical sport but this is just disgraceful bad behaviour and it's unacceptable."

Sidaway said the Wasps, who are part of Sir John Hall's Newcastle Sporting Club, had "already been warned about their conduct during the barn-up and Humberdale brawl".

Irene Lucas, the council's general manager of direct services, said yesterday that a meeting would take place this week with the Wasps management but that "talk of banning the Wasps from the centre is premature".

Newcastle Sporting Club said it was unable to comment because of the police investigation but, if the Wasps have to leave Sunderland, they could be without a home as Sir John's planning application for an 8,000-seat indoor arena adjacent to St James' Park was rejected by Newcastle City Council.

Meanwhile the British Ice Hockey Association has ordered the match, a British Championship play-off, to be replayed tomorrow night. However, the Sunderland rink may not be available, so those at Blackburn and Nottingham have been put on stand-by.

Saturday's brawl occurred during the barn-up and Humberdale brawl was taken to hospital having sustained a broken nose and lost some teeth. The Durham players Ross Lambert and Jon Weaver were later arrested.

In the incident three months ago, in a match against Sheffield Steelers, Lambert was the injured party. Nicky Chinn is due to appear in court later this month facing a charge of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.

Wasps faced better on Sunday when five players, including Lambert, shared the goals in a 6-2 win at Cardiff.

Sheffield Steelers' hopes of adding the British Championship to the league title and Benson and Hedges Cup received a jolt when they lost 5-2 at Basingstoke on Saturday. However, they recovered to beat File 11-0 in Kirkcaldy the following evening.

Golf

Rookie Herron is rock solid

David Davies in Coral Springs

AS a thoroughly sudden Sunday drew to a dank, but dramatic close, Tim Herron demonstrated one last time why he had seemed destined to win the Honda Classic.

Herron had arrived at the Eagle Trace club here in Florida a complete unknown. He left clutching a cheque for \$539,000 (\$157,000 having got round one of the US Tour's tougher tracks in a 17-under-par 271. To achieve that he had used only 107 putts in the four rounds, none of them more important than the one at the penultimate hole.

Herron had putted beautifully all week but, as a rookie in only his seventh US Tour event, he was understandably "a little anxious" on the 17th tee, little with a five-stroke lead. The hole is only 171 yards but between tee and green there is nothing but

water. "I rushed the shot, I got it fat, it went into the hole," said Herron later and indeed so awful was the shot that it seemed even a lead as large as his might dissolve in the next few minutes.

So what did Herron do? He did what he had been doing all week: he hit his third shot to 12 feet and held one of the most vital putts he will ever have to make for a four. "I was just rolling the pill, the rock, whatever you want to call it, just awesome this hole," he said. "I'm from Minnesota. We're not even playing golf in April. I just usually sit and watch it on TV."

Had he an explanation for his win? "Everyone kept telling me I had this unbelievable talent," said Herron on Sunday, "but if I had, why wasn't I shooting good golf scores? I got a little frustrated." That, it seems, is code for angry and a large part of his win was because at last he contained his temper — not forgetting 107 putts.

It was a word he used a lot in the immediate aftermath of his win to describe a victory that could hardly have been less expected. Herron, a Walker Cup player in 1993, has spent the intervening time touring the world trying to find tournaments. He has found himself competing in Canada, Australia and on the Nike tour, the subsidiary tour in America.

Now he finds himself in the field for the Masters. Had he ever played Augusta? "Hell no," he said. "I'm from Minnesota. We're not even playing golf in April. I just usually sit and watch it on TV."

Not that such a low number guarantees victory. Nick Faldo, who by playing the last 54 holes in 12 under par equalled the best efforts of anyone else in the field, also had 107 putts, which helped to lift him to joint ninth, earning him \$35,100.

He finished one shot better than Sandy Lyle's worst in the locker room afterwards, could talk of nothing but his putting. It was little wonder for he had nine more than either Herron or Faldo and, had he putted at their level, would have come second.

In recent years Lyle has tried all manner of things to find a more consistent way of putting, including his present method of left hand below right and also the long putter. But he has ruled out a trip to Dave Pelz, the putting guru to whom Bernhard Langer repaired two weeks ago in search of salvation. "I'll find something," said Lyle, who is prepared to work as hard as necessary to do so.

Athletics

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Ice Hockey

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Vic Batchelder

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Wild game, but then the English have always been partial to blood sports. First game April 14th London Monarchs V Scottish Claymores

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Super League faces ban till 2000, page 14
South Africa's bubble bursts, page 15

SportsGuardian

FRENCHMAN'S STRIKE SEES UNITED HOME AND DRY IN THE OLD TRAFFORD RAIN

FA Cup, sixth round: Manchester United 2, Southampton 0

Cantona scuppers Saints

Cynthia Bateman

A HUNDRED of a cup tie in which Manchester United by no means had everything their own way, was settled by the simplest of goals as Eric Cantona lapped in a cross from Ryan Giggs at the start of the second half. Sharpe's last-minute goal added insult to injury.

United, in front of a 45,446 crowd, became the first side to book a semi-final spot and will meet either Wimbledon or Chelsea at Villa Park. An absorbing game saw Southampton hold out against a rampant United and then have a goal by Neil Shipperley disallowed in controversial circumstances just before the interval.

Old Trafford was not exactly packed to the rafters, with one tier of the new North Stand still empty, but it still provided a terrific theatre for a match of this importance. The only other gaps in the packed ranks were at the Southampton end. They had returned 4,000 of their tickets unsold, an indication that the Saints' supporters were travelling more in hope that realism as the rank outsiders to win the Cup met the firm favourites.

The trouble with playing underdogs, though, as United soon found out, is that since nothing better is expected of them, they enjoy snapping at the heels and biting a few legs.

Southampton, the last side to win here in a quarter-final, and then on penalties in a fourth-round replay four years ago, began with tremendous spirit, momentarily forgetting that the idea was to keep things tight at the back. The result was a series of swift, incisive moves from United that simply cut through the Southampton ranks and gave Beasant an early work-out.

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Within minutes, United had



Up and over... the Southampton striker Neil Shipperley. Later to have a 'goal' ruled out, leaps to get the better of Steve Bruce

rattled Southampton. Giggs's chance for Keane, saw Monkou, who was magnificent in Southampton's defence, clear off the line before Butt played Cantona through. He beat the advancing Beasant but failed to chase as the ball bounced over the goalkeeper, and the scamparing Monkou cleared off the line. Cole had another chance a

few minutes later but could put no power on the shot and then blocked a volley from Butt. All this before a quarter of an hour had passed. Next Sharpe had a header saved at the foot of the post, and Cole felt hard done by not to get a penalty when Hall appeared to wrestle him to the ground as he went for goal.

But Southampton survived the result represented a remarkable comeback for a team who had been written off and pilloried 12 days previously when they had been humiliated by Kenya. Brian Lara also put his personal troubles behind him by striking a magnificent 111 off 94 balls. Only last week he had been forced to apologise for "anti-South Africa" comments - remarks which Lara said were taken out of context.

"It was a nightmare against Kenya," said Richie Richardson. "But we have come out of the almost bottomless pit and bounced back. People at home are very hungry for success

and we have let them down a bit recently." However, Richardson insisted that he will not rethink his decision to retire from international cricket even if West Indies win the tournament.

Southampton continued to make the running at the start of the second half when Wal-

ters escaped down the left and crossed for Le Tissier, whose header went wide. But within five minutes of the restart, United were ahead. Cole's through ball found Giggs, whose square pass across the face of goal by-passed Beasant and found Cantona unmarked at the far post and able to simply tap the ball into the net.

Southampton pressed United into their own area as they threw caution to the winds. An equaliser almost came just before the hour from Le Tissier's pass to Wal-

Very British, the bravery of Brundle



Richard Williams

WAS halfway through a lollipop, one of those chocolate and ice-cream jobs, when Martin Brundle had his accident on Sunday. There was a kind of collective gasp and then a groan in the Melbourne press room as we watched his car flying along the track, upside down at zero feet, before it started tumbling into a series of cartwheels, destroying itself in a cloud of dust and wreckage.

One does not know what to do at such moments. There is no etiquette. Do you turn away or carry on watching? Finishing the lollipop did not seem quite apropos.

I do not believe anyone goes to a motor race in the hope of seeing an accident. But the spectacular ones do stick in the memory, especially when they involve a phenomenal escape. One recalls Andrea de Cesaris rolling his Ligier countless times over the grass in Austria in 1985. Mauricio Gugelmin flying his March above the pack at Le Castellet in 1990 and Christian Fittipaldi's Minardi almost looping the loop at Monza three years ago.

ished chatter as the TV cameras refocused on the gold Jordan, torn in two just behind the driver's seat.

"It just kept rolling over and over," Brundle said later, "and when it stopped I could feel fluid coming out. I thought it was petrol but it wasn't, it was coming out of my drinks bottle. I was fine. When I got out I thought 'That's made a million dollars worth, or whatever, just history'."

Brundle's subsequent sprint up and down the pit lane, wearing thick flame-proof overalls in 85-degree heat, will become a minor motor-racing legend, a perfect what-happened-next moment for A Question of Sport.

He was in search of Prof Syd Watkins, the veteran Formula One medical chief.

"Two doctors saw me in the pits and said I was fine but they wouldn't let me race until I'd seen Prof Watkins and got his permission," Brundle explained. "Nobody seemed to be able to tell me where he was. If I'd waited for somebody else to find him, I'd have missed the restart. So I had to go and find him myself."

Watkins put his arm around Brundle's shoulders and listened to his plea. And when he cleared him to jump into the restarted race, there was a moment of pure elation that went to the centre of the human spirit.

AFTERWARDS Brundle achieved the sort of another-of-factness that we admire in our British heroes. "If I'd lost consciousness during the accident," he said, "I wouldn't have got back in. But Syd's known me for a dozen years and, when he saw me sprinting 500 metres towards him, he guessed that I was all right."

It did not really matter that, for Brundle, the restarted race lasted only a few more corners. "I caught up the pack but my brakes were cold from starting from the pits. They need to be up to about 600 centigrade before they'll work properly. But, when I came up behind (Pedro) Diniz and he braked early, I didn't have that luxury."

Lara and Waugh hundreds set up classic semi-final

WEST Indies set up what promises to be an epic World Cup semi-final against Australia on Thursday after beating the joint favourites South Africa by 19 runs in Karachi yesterday.

The result represented a remarkable comeback for a team who had been written off and pilloried 12 days previously when they had been humiliated by Kenya. Brian Lara also put his personal troubles behind him by striking a magnificent 111 off 94 balls. Only last week he had been forced to apologise for "anti-South Africa" comments - remarks which Lara said were taken out of context.

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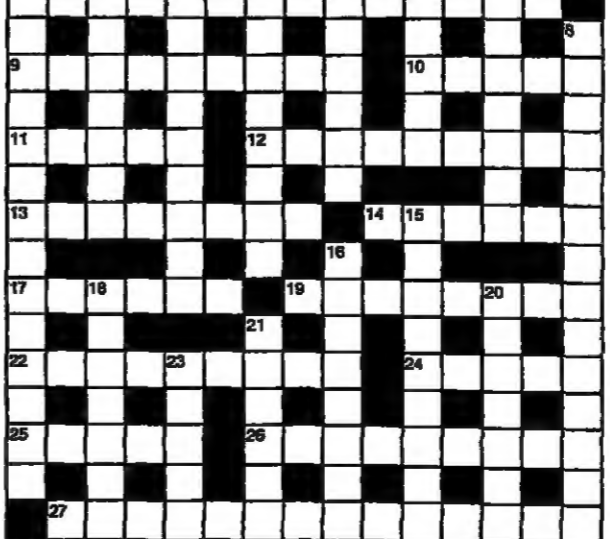
Lara... back to his best

They now travel to India for the second semi-final in Chandigarh. Waiting for them will be Australia, whom they beat in a group match, although for a while yesterday it looked as if it might be New Zealand.

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Guardian Crossword No 20,598

Set by Janus



Across
1 What charity might do in once-disputed area (5,8)
9 One possessing power of mighty goddess (8)
10 Turn (or half a turn?) (5)
11 For them it is natural to sing a part (5)
12 Detestable river-crustacean to the French (9)
13 Settle security in children's conceptions (8)
14 Good strong leader on first-class little tree (8)
17 Mistake by king's chief electrician (5)
19 Sweets said to be just reward (8)
22 Girl-friend at a Roman one may be taken back (9)
24 What's left by novice in rice-patch (5)
25 Taken in at school it is said (5)

Down
1 Where dad turned up a freshly-minted coin (5,3,8)
2 Understatement involving falsehoods about child (7)
3 Rock striking wrong note on the beach (9)
4 Ducal carriage? (8)
5 Jacket seen when queen goes to bank (6)
6 Does it flow in the veins of classic horse? (5)
7 Travel-book? (7)
8 Financial institution and what it might do (7,7)
15 They keep an eye on attendants at outside broadcast (5)
16 Does he restore broken marriage? (8)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,597

18 Had no food out East but fared sumptuously (7)
20 Relief-work by soldier on olive-press (7)
21 Find fault with alien visitor's floor-covering (6)
23 Light-weight feline (5)

Solution tomorrow
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To be the executor of the estate of a famous writer is, these days, the beginning of a hell lasting years. Armies of academics and scribblers will battle for the trinkets. What you are adjudicating is the ownership of a life.

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